

U.N. okays Dubai-Iraq shipping shuttle

NICOSIA (R) — The U.N. Sanctions Committee has agreed in principle to a request from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for a direct shipping link between the UAE and Iraq, the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) reported on Monday. A ship would shuttle food and other U.N.-approved supplies to the Iraqi Gulf port of Umm Qasr from Jabel Ali, a port in Dubai in the UAE. The official Iraqi media has reported four ships bringing food to Umm Qasr since late last year — the first to do so since the end of the 1990-91 war over Kuwait, but a regular shuttle would be new, MEES said. The committee stipulated that Iraq can have no equity stake in the company, nor will it be allowed to provide bunker fuel, even for free as the Iraqi government has offered. MEES said it understood passengers would also be banned. The authoritative newsletter also said Iraq is campaigning actively to speed up the timetable for the lifting of sanctions. The ban on Iraqi oil exports is officially tied only to compliance on the destruction of Iraqi weapons, though Security Council members are now seeking Iraqi compliance on other issues, to which wider U.N. sanctions are linked.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
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PLO, Arabs in contact on meeting

AMMAN (R) — A Palestinian official said on Monday the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was in contact with Arab states on convening an emergency meeting to back its conditions for resuming peace talks with Israel, suspended after the Hebron mosque massacre. The PLO is awaiting the response to its call for such a meeting to discuss the peace process from the Arab parties to the peace talks, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab Maghreb Union, said Saleh Rasat, member of the Palestine Central Council. The PLO wants Arabs to back its demands for international protection for Palestinians in the occupied territories and the disarming of Jewish settlers before it resumes peace talks. Mr. Rasat told Reuters Syria and Egypt had so far voiced backing for such a meeting. Contacts were continuing with Saudi Arabia. Farouk Kaddoumi, the PLO's foreign affairs chief this week visited Syria, which has criticised the PLO for reaching a Palestinian self-rule deal with Israel in September. PLO leader Yasser Arafat met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Sunday.

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Libya: Blast convicts 'scapegoats'

TUNIS (R) — Libya Monday attacked a U.S. court decision declaring four people guilty of bombing New York's World Trade Centre and called the defendants "scapegoats" for shortcomings of the U.S. administration. "This is an unjust and unjust ruling based on racism," said the commentator of the official Libyan news agency IANA. "No material evidence was presented to demonstrate without any doubt if the American trade centre was bombed or if it exploded... (for) any other reason, nor was evidence presented on the link between those condemned by the court and this event," the commentator added. "Therefore there was no reason to accuse these people and condemn them other than saying they were Muslims."

Rockets kill 6 in Afghan capital

KABUL (AP) — A rocket attack near a food distribution site Monday killed at least six people, injured 30 and sent hundreds more scrambling for cover, officials said. The rival factions exchanged fire throughout the day, sending scores of rockets crashing into the battered capital. Aid agencies, meanwhile, began handing out bags of wheat brought in by the United Nations a day earlier. The aid workers were giving food to hungry residents at a mosque in northwest Kabul when several rockets slammed into a nearby street, causing the deaths and injuries (see earlier story on page 10).

7th body found in Gloucester

GLOUCESTER (AP) — Police found a seventh body Monday buried in the house of a man charged with killing three women, including his 16-year-old daughter. Frederick West appeared in magistrates court Monday and was ordered held for a further four days. He has not entered a plea. Gloucester police said the three bodies found over the weekend buried under the basement of the shabby three-storey Victorian row house were also female. Police could not say if the seventh body, also found under the basement, was male or female. Police have not said how any of the victims had died (see story on page 8). Chief Inspector Colin Handy said once police have finished searching the house, including demolishing an addition built by Mr. West, they could search some other sites and they had no idea how many bodies they would find.

Tunisia bans entry to Monde reporter

PARIS (R) — The French newspaper Le Monde said on Monday that Tunisia had told one of its reporters he would be turned back if he tried to enter the country to cover forthcoming elections. Le Monde said its roving correspondent, Jacques de Barrin, was told by the Tunisian Agency for External Communication (ATCE) that he was not welcome in the country. Spokesman for the Paris office of ATCE, a state-run body dealing with the foreign news media, and the Tunisian embassy declined to comment. French nationals do not need a visa to visit Tunisia. Campaigning for Tunisia's presidential and parliamentary elections on March 20 started on Sunday.

Iran moves 2,400 Iraqis to camp

NICOSIA (R) — Some 2,400 Iraqis who fled to Iran from army attacks in southern marshes have been transferred to a camp away from the border, Iran's IRNA news agency said on Monday. It quoted a local official as saying the refugees were taken by bus to Bani Najjar camp near Shushar about 120 kilometres from the border over the past two weeks. The refugees began streaming into Iran last July.

Israel offers new proposals to Arafat

Direct contacts revived, but present Israeli ideas unlikely to lift logjam

Rabin warns against delay in talks, defers vote on settlements

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAEL ON MONDAY offered Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat new proposals to restart Middle East peace negotiations that were suspended following the Hebron mosque massacre.

But Palestinian officials in Tunis said they contained "nothing new" towards meeting PLO demands and were likely to be rejected.

The proposals were presented to Mr. Arafat by Jacques Neriah, a top adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, in a meeting at a presidential palace in suburban Heliopolis in Cairo.

It was the first official contact between the two sides since Feb. 25, when a Jewish settler opened fire on Palestinians praying in a mosque in the West Bank town of Hebron, killing at least 60 Palestinians.

The PLO halted negotiations with Israel after the massacre and said talks would not resume until the Jewish state agrees to guarantee the security of the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Monday's meeting was shrouded in secrecy, with both Israeli and PLO officials in Cairo refusing even to confirm it occurred.

Egyptian government officials said it had taken place. PLO officials in Tunis, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Neriah gave Mr. Arafat new proposals, but revealed no details.

They said Mr. Arafat was withholding comment until he could consult with the United States and Russia, the co-sponsors of the peace process.

Mr. Arafat and Mr. Neriah left Egypt after the meeting without speaking to reporters.

Mr. Neriah had participated

in recent rounds of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations in Egypt.

Egypt, long a mediator in the peace talks, has been trying to get the two sides back together since the massacre.

Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) said that in addition to dealing with the Israel-PLO talks, the latest Israeli proposals were aimed at breaking a logjam in the U.N. Security Council on the massacre.

Security Council members have been deadlocked on the wording of a resolution to condemn the Feb. 25 slayings and consider creation of an observer force in the occupied territories.

Mr. Arafat told reporters after meeting with Egyptian officials on Sunday he would not commit to new talks with Israel until the U.N. Security Council passes the resolution.

MENA also said Israel was proposing that Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin meet in Cairo or Washington to resolve the impasse.

Mr. Arafat already has turned down two requests from Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres for face-to-face talks, the agency said.

He urged the United Nations on Monday to speed up a long-delayed resolution on the Hebron slaughter, saying this was a prerequisite for resuming negotiations with Israel.

"We cannot talk about the resumption of peace talks with Israel before the United Nations position and resolution come out clear," Mr. Arafat said.

"We insist that the Security Council condemn this ugly massacre (in a resolution) that provides full protection for our people and disarms the (Jewish) settlers," he added.

(Continued on page 5)

6 SLA men, 2 others killed in S. Lebanon

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (Agencies) — Resistance fighters killed six Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militiamen and two civilians on the edge of an Israeli-occupied sector of South Lebanon Monday, security sources said.

The fatalities were the highest in South Lebanon in nearly six months.

Four militiamen were killed at mid-morning in two simultaneous roadside bombings in the central and eastern sectors of an area of South Lebanon Israel occupied as a "security zone" against guerrilla attacks. Several hours later, two more SLA militiamen died in a third roadside bomb.

The civilians, a man and a woman, were kidnapped by guerrillas on the edge of the "security zone." Their bullet-riddled bodies were found later in the fields, said the sources.

No explanation was available for the civilian killing, but it was believed that the two were targeted as suspected collaborators with the Israeli-backed SLA.

Israeli forces and SLA gunmen retaliated for the bomb attacks by firing artillery and mortars on suspected guerrilla hideouts just north of the "security zone." Several villages in Iqlim Al Tuffah were targeted by the shelling, said the sources.

They said the guerrillas detonated by remote control a roadside bomb at the Beit Yahoun passageway, which links the occupied zone's eastern sector with government-held territory to the north.

Another remote-controlled bomb exploded at the same

time near the Rihan hilltop outpost in the central sector of the zone as an SLA patrol drove by. Three SLA militiamen died in that attack.

Other guerrillas firing anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs attacked four Israeli and SLA positions on the zone but there were no casualties.

At the Beit Yahoun crossing, a 35-year-old commander of the local SLA garrison, was killed. Abdul Nabi Ayoub, also known as Al Jalbut, was riding in one of two cars hit by the bomb near the crossing, said the sources.

Less than three hours after the first attack at Beit Yahoun, a roadside bomb exploded as an SLA foot patrol conducted searches in the area of the first explosion. The security sources said two militiamen were killed and seven wounded, most of them seriously, in the second bombing.

Hizbollah claimed responsibility for the Beit Yahoun attack. But Hizbollah made no mention of the Rihan attack and the kidnapping and killing of civilians.

Monday's fatalities were the highest since Aug. 19 when guerrillas attacked an Israeli patrol, killing eight soldiers.

Tension heightened in South Lebanon after Hizbollah guerrillas ambushed an Israeli patrol inside the "security zone" Feb. 7, killing four soldiers and wounding five others.

The "security zone" covers 1,100 square kilometres stretching from the Mediterranean coast 80 kilometres inland to the foothills of Mount Hermon.



Israeli soldiers Monday guard Palestinian students arrested in Bethlehem University campus. The university was ordered closed until further notice (AFP photo).

Palestinian shot dead in Hebron

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers shot dead a Palestinian and seriously wounded one person during stone-throwing incidents in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron on Monday, hospital officials said.

A Jewish settler massacred about 60 Muslim worshippers in Hebron 11 days ago, sparking almost daily unrest in the city of 110,000 Palestinians.

Israeli soldiers shot and wounded 17 Palestinians and an American news photographer in the occupied territories on Monday.

Seventeen Palestinians were wounded by army gunfire in

Hebron during protests that erupted after the military briefly lifted a curfew imposed in the wake of the mosque massacre, witnesses said.

The photographer, who works for the Associated Press, was identified by AP as John Gaps III, 35.

Nick Tatro, AP Israel bureau chief, said a soldier with an automatic weapon equipped with a telescopic sight shot Gaps in the knee from a distance of about 100 metres in Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip.

"There was a burning tyre nearby and a few Palestinian children, but no demonstra-

tion," Mr. Tatro said. "No other shots were fired at anybody or anything. I filed a complaint with the foreign press association and the army spokesman's office" (see page 10).

Earlier, Israel Radio and security sources said an Israeli policeman was wounded when his patrol car came under fire at a checkpoint in the Gaza Strip.

According to the radio, the driver of a suspicious car opened fire after police ordered him to pull over. It said the policeman was injured

(Continued on page 5)

Settler families quit Kiryat Arba as Hamas sets March 15 deadline

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — About 10 families living in the Jewish settlement that was home to the Hebron mosque killer are seeking safety inside Israel and are being helped by the Israeli government.

Another 20 have asked for government help and a Labour Party legislator said around 100 had inquired about moving out. Some 6,000 Israelis live in the settlement.

Official government policy is to discourage an exodus from settlements in the Israeli-occupied territories.

Palestinian groups have threatened to retaliate against settlers for the Feb. 25 killing by a Jewish settler of some 60 Palestinians in the mosque, near Kiryat Arba.

On Monday, one group said

in a statement that settlers had one week to quit the settlements, and specifically named Kiryat Arba.

"We helped about 10 families. We helped them with rent for a limited time on a humanitarian basis," said Ofra Preus, an adviser to Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer.

She said a total of 30 Kiryat Arba families had applied for rent subsidies inside Israel. Avi, head of a family of six who left Kiryat Arba last Thursday, said he was fed up with life in the settlement — one of the most militant Israeli enclaves in the territories.

"In the aftermath of the incident (massacre), my children became anxious... I decided enough. There is nothing for me anymore in Kiryat Arba

after what I went through," he said.

"They have come to the ministry and announced in an unequivocal way and not manipulatively that they are anxious about living in Kiryat Arba," said housing ministry official Israel Schwartz.

Mr. Schwartz told Israel Radio the ministry expected more families to ask for the 800 shekel (\$270) monthly assistance.

Mr. Schwartz told Israel Radio that some 30 families, mostly from Kiryat Arba, have asked for government assistance to move back to Israel because they fear Arab vengeance.

"They said straight out... that they're terrified of living

(Continued on page 3)

U.N. prepares to reopen Tuzla; Bosnian Serbs bombard Maglaj

ZAGREB (Agencies) — U.N. peacekeepers deployed troops around Tuzla airport Monday, ready to open a strategic lifeline to the northern Muslim enclave, a U.N. official said.

"We have begun to station soldiers there today," U.N. deputy spokesman Matthew Nerzig said. "It is a part of the effort to reopen Tuzla airport."

The U.N. is poised to reopen the former military airport, to help it to deliver aid to hundreds of thousands of local residents and refugees from eastern Bosnia, cut-off from receiving adequate food supplies by besieging Bosnian Serb forces.

Mr. Nerzig said the U.N. was set to open the airport with or without the consent of the Serbs who object, saying they fear the Muslim-led Bosnian army would use it for smuggling weapons.

"The U.N. will reopen the airport whether diplomatically or with other means," he said. Bosnian Serb leader Rado-

van Karadzic agreed in Moscow last week to reopen the airport only if Russian U.N. monitors were deployed there to ensure it would be used solely for humanitarian purposes.

This suggestion drew objections from the Sarajevo government which accused the Russian peacekeepers of siding with the Serbs.

Bosnian Serbs pounded an isolated pocket of government territory Monday in northern Bosnia and blocked critical aid shipments with "no answer and no excuse," U.N. officials said.

Most of Bosnia was reported to be calm, almost four weeks into a truce between government forces and Serbs around Sarajevo and 1½ weeks into a separate ceasefire between the Muslim-led government and Croats in central Bosnia.

U.N. officials reported that Croats and the Muslim-led army were marking minefields and beginning to turn in weapons to cement their truce. Heavy weaponry was to be moved or collected by noon

(1100 GMT) Monday.

In Sarajevo, Bosnian radio said three government soldiers were wounded Monday morning near the Jewish cemetery, where there have been recent skirmishes with Serb forces. It remained mostly quiet elsewhere in the Bosnian capital.

But Monday was another hard day for the besieged government-controlled enclave of Maglaj, about 80 kilometres north of Sarajevo. It is home to about 19,000 people.

Neither U.N. peacekeeping forces nor aid organisations have a regular presence there.

Bosnian radio reported heavy shelling of Maglaj on Monday morning, despite a planned ceasefire intended to permit an exchange of bodies of dead soldiers. U.N. spokesman Major Jose Labandeira in Sarajevo said U.N. observers in the area also reported heavy shelling, but had no details.

"We are not allowed to move troops to Maglaj," he said.

Jordan: Israeli negligence caused Hebron massacre

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan on Monday lodged a protest with the United Nations Security Council against plans by Israeli settlers to prevent Muslims from reaching Islamic holy sites in occupied Jerusalem and sought U.N. action to block the plans.

The Jordanian protest and demand came in a letter sent by the Kingdom's permanent delegate to the U.N., Adnan Abu Odeh.

Citing a Dec. 22 report by the Jerusalem Post that extremist settlers had already worked out plans to prevent Muslims from going to their holy places, Mr. Abu Odeh demanded that the Jordanian letter of protest be circulated as a United Nations document.

In the letter, Mr. Abu Odeh blamed Israel for failing to take appropriate measures to protect the Palestinians and prevent the Feb. 25 massacre at the Ibrahim Mosque in the occupied West Bank town of Hebron.

At least 60 Palestinians were killed and over 400 wounded in the attack, which Israel said was carried out by a lone extremist Jewish settler.

The Jordanian protest letter to the U.N., a text of which was carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said: "Based on the U.N. Security Council deliberations on the massacre at the Al Ibrahim mosque in Hebron, and out of Jordan's commitment to achieving a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and to bring to

success the whole peace process that started in Madrid in 1991, I send you a copy of a report published by the Jerusalem Post... in its issue of Dec. 22, 1993.

"The target is Jabal Al Heikel (Temple Mount, as the Israelis call the area). This report exposes the ill-intentions of the extremist Jewish groups in the occupied territories i.e. Kach movement, which has carried out provocative and terrorist actions to undermine the peace process.

"Publishing such a report at that time was a warning to the Israeli government, which claims it supports the peace efforts, to take extra precautions against these groups to prevent the massacre in the Al Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron.

"Negligence on the part of the Israeli government was behind that massacre.

"I hope your council will take this report into consideration that might lead to a suitable resolution on protection for the Palestinians and the holy shrines until a final settlement is reached for the Middle East conflict."

The Security Council is debating a draft resolution on the Hebron massacre, but differences between Washington and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are holding up agreement on the text of the resolution.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on Monday called on the council to expedite the endorsement of the resolution.

Israeli-Arab team arrives in Syria

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syria gave a low-key welcome Monday to a delegation of Israeli Arabs on the first-ever official visit by Israelis to Syria.

Damascus Mayor Walid Hamamiyah and Khaled Fahoum, former speaker of the Palestine National Council and spokesman for Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), welcomed the 58-member delegation at Damascus international airport at 12:30 p.m. (1030 GMT).

A dozen plainclothes security officials surrounded the plane as the delegation, headed by Israeli parliamentarian Abdul Wahab Darawshe, descended the aircraft steps. The group includes politicians, academics, writers and other prominent Israeli Arabs. Nine are journalists.

Mr. Darawshe said in an airport statement that the main aim of the visit was to offer condolences to President Hafez Al Assad on the death of his son Basel, who was killed in a car crash Jan. 21.

He said he was not carrying any messages to Mr. Assad, whom the group is scheduled to meet Wednesday. But Mr. Darawshe has not ruled out political talks if Syria wishes.

A Syrian official said no officials greeted the group because the government did not want to cast political overtones on the visit. He said Syria considered the delegation to be just like any other Arab delegation that has come to offer condolences.

The visit comes at a very sensitive time in the wake of the Hebron massacre, which dramatically heightened tensions between the Arab World and Israel and caused the suspension of the 28-month-old Middle East Peace talks.

Before the massacre, Mr. Assad held a summit with President Bill Clinton after which he had out the possibility of

normal relations with Israel. However, Damascus is demanding the return of the entire Golan Heights, seized by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, as a precondition to peace.

Israel and Syria have been in a state of war since 1948, when the Jewish state was formed. More than 4,500 Syrians were killed and 21,000 wounded in the four Arab-Israeli wars since 1948. Israel lost more than 10,000 people in these wars.

The visit of the Israeli-Arab delegation suggests that despite the lack of progress in the talks, the Syrians did not want to put an end to the negotiations and are showing flexibility by talking to members of Israel's parliament, an institution Damascus does not directly recognise.

The PLO's Fahoum, whose brother Hani was part of the delegation, said the visit would give a push to the stalled peace talks.

"The trip will definitely give an impetus to the negotiations because it will strengthen Arab solidarity thus reinforcing the wish for a comprehensive peace settlement," Mr. Fahoum told the Associated Press.

As members of the group descended the aircraft steps, their eyes filled with wonder as they darted from left to right. Some captured their first impressions of Syria on camera. "I don't know whether I'm dreaming or awake," said Na'eema Jibara, 39, from Taibe, near Ramallah. "I can't believe I'm in an Arab country."

But few Syrians were aware of the group's visit. The state-run Syrian Arab News agency, which says feeds Syria's media, issued a two-paragraph dispatch saying only that a delegation of leading Palesti-

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Patience wears thin in Somalia

By Terry Leonard
The Associated Press

MOGADISHU — General Mohammad Farrah Aided, the strongman of south Mogadishu, has burglar bars on the window of his newly restored home.

On any other whitewashed villa in a city teeming with cutthroats and thieves, the gently curving wrought-iron guards would seem prudent.

But Gen. Aided has a well-armed militia that fiercely defended the house, which was heavily damaged in an American attack last June. What burglar would dare scale the walls and pry open a window?

Burglar bars, armed guards and high walls with broken glass embedded on top are simply a sign of the times. Now that American and most European soldiers are withdrawing and the United Nations is scaling down its mission, Somalia is slowly being left to grapple with its own problems.

Unless Somalia find Somali solutions to Somali problems and do it soon, U.N. officials say, the country will find little peace behind its high fences.

"We keep telling the Somalis not to forget Afghanistan," said Staffan de Mistura, director of the U.N. Children's Fund in Somalia. "They were loved in the West but they went too far. What are they now but an embarrassing backyard, an embarrassing tragedy that is forgotten and left behind?"

More is dwindling in Somalia than the number of foreign peacekeepers: International goodwill and patience are flagging.

Bill Kirk, an Australian police superintendent helping to train 10,000 Somali policemen to fight the rising banditry and violence, says the United Nations cannot cope with the clan rivalries that complicate recruiting and undermine confidence and support for the force.

"It's a real problem, but it is really a problem for the Somalis," he said. "They are going to have to work it out."

Some Somalis search for answers. Clan elders and religious leaders have used their influence to negotiate freedom for kidnapped foreigners and confront the banditry. In some places, they have established courts that mete out punishment according to a harsh Islamic code that allows execution and the severing of limbs.

Other Somalis bristle at suggestions that the Western departure signals the beginning of the end for Somalia.

"The presence of foreign troops here is not preventing any Somalis from fighting each other," said Abdul Karim Ahmad Ali, secretary-general of Gen. Aided's political organisation, the Somali National Alliance.

"They are not preventing any clashes in the country. They remain behind their sandbags. It is the Somali people who have decided not to fight."

U.N. forces are indeed largely hunkered down behind sandbags, more than 14 million sandbags in all, stacked at every U.N. position and filled with about 280,000 tonnes of Somalia's most abundant natural resource.

Therein lies the message. With the cold war over and Somalia's strategic importance in the Horn of Africa diminished, foreigners are less willing to risk their lives to keep Somalia from killing each other for control of vast tracts of land.

U.N. military sources predict an attack soon on the southern port of Kismayo by irregulars led by Colonel Omar Jess, who is intent on wresting the city from rival warlord Mohammed Siad Hirsi, better known as General Morgan.

U.N. diplomats and officials have sought to cool the feud, but peacekeeping troops will no longer intervene.

There also are fears of factional warfare.

"We will go through a period of hot negotiations in the Somali tradition," said Mr. De Mistura of UNICEF. "There will be disagreements over the details in negotiations. Those disagreements will produce days and weeks of violence."

Nonetheless, Mr. De Mistura sees some reason for optimism. "The bottom line is, Somalia is not ever likely to become Switzerland, so we have to accept different criteria for assessing it," he said.

Mr. De Mistura and other foreign officials in Mogadishu say they believe factional leaders who insist they do not want a resumption of the civil war that produced Somalia's famine and killed 350,000 people. The trick, they say, is how to contain local battles.

Transcripts said to show how Mubarak plot was worked out

NEW YORK (AP) — A plot to assassinate Egypt's president was in the works until the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was tipped off, according to transcripts of a government informant's conversations.

Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali, the alleged mastermind of a plot to bomb New York City landmarks, discussed the plans at length with Emad Salem, according to transcripts of the conversations. Mr. Salem is an informant who secretly recorded the discussions as he worked with the FBI.

The men spoke frequently of Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak, during conversations contained in transcripts seen by the Associated Press.

They referred to him as the "laughing cow," an apparent reference to an expression he made in a photograph.

Mr. Siddiq Ali told Mr. Salem there were three potential plans to assassinate Mr. Mubarak last April during a visit to New York, according to the transcripts. In one, two men would shoot at the same time from different locations as Mr. Mubarak walked out a door of an unspecified location.

In the second scenario, a team of 10 men would overpower kitchen staff and security officers at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel and don room service uniforms.

"We'll go in with the president's order himself and his staff, we'll use guards, we'll deal with the reality as it is and the shooting will be merciless," Mr. Siddiq Ali is quoted as saying. "No mercy. All the same, they will be all gone. It's going to be a suicidal operation."

In the third scenario, the men would overtake a United Parcel Service truck and park it a block from the Waldorf. As the president arrived in a motorcade and stepped out of his car, "three will be shooting and throwing grenades, two will be covering them from the back," Mr. Siddiq Ali is quoted as saying.

"It is a suicidal operation because the street will be covered with police," he said.



BETHLEHEM PROTESTS: An Israeli soldier clashes with Palestinian student protesters on fires tear-gas while his comrades advance inside Monday. The occupation authorities ordered the Bethlehem University's compound during heavy

Jewish, Muslim leaders discuss New York tensions

NEW YORK (AP) — Working to establish calm despite increased tensions, leaders of the city's Jewish and Muslim communities met in Brooklyn to condemn terrorism and share concerns.

"We are here side by side. Let's continue living side by side," city councilman Noach Dear said at a Sunday news conference following the meeting.

Mr. Dear said he asked for the meeting instead of a pending Muslim demonstration. He said Muslim groups planned to demonstrate at the Brooklyn offices of Kahane Chai, an organisation founded in the memory of the extremist Zionist Rabbi Meir Kahane.

Dr. Baruch Goldstein, a Brooklyn-born Israeli settler, killed 60 Muslims last month as they prayed at a mosque in the occupied West Bank. Goldstein was a follower of Kahane. Kahane Chai praised his act.

Adding to tensions, Rashad Baz, a Lebanese resident of New York, has been charged with shooting four teenage Yeshiva students on the Brooklyn Bridge last week, killing one and injuring three others. One of them, Aaron Halberstam, 16, died Saturday. He was buried Sunday.

"We discussed recognising that the Jewish community is in agony because of the death of this young student," said M.T. Mehdi, president of the American-Arab Relations Committee.

"We also spoke of the agony and the pain of the Palestinian parents of those who were killed in the mosque. ... Only when we share our pain can we reach an understanding."

Mr. Dear, a Brooklyn Democrat who represents several neighbourhoods with heavy concentrations of orthodox Jews, said those present agreed to condemn all forms of terrorism.

"The focus was not on the past, but for the future, how we can live together, and work together, and maybe calm down some of the tension that is there," he said.

About 20 people attended the meeting in the basement of the 70th Precinct stationhouse. Not all, however, were appeased.

Ali Awwad, president of Arab-Americans of Brooklyn, said there was still a lot of work left to be done. "Unfortunately, we haven't reached the point in labeling Kahane Chai as a terrorist organisation, but that's our main goal," he said.

Lebanese Christian leaders urge Pope to defer trip

BEIRUT (R) — A prominent Christian leader urged Pope John Paul II on Monday to postpone his visit to Lebanon in the wake of recent bomb attacks on Christians and a former president warned the visit could spark more violence.

The statements by Raymond Edde, a self-exiled Maronite Christian leader, and ex-President Charles Helou follow expressions of doubt about the visit by General Michel Aoun, another Maronite leader and former Lebanese army commander exiled in France.

Mr. Edde said in a statement published in Beirut newspapers the Pope's visit planned for May should be delayed "because of the current circumstances" in Lebanon.

Postponement was "in the interest of the Vatican and in the interest of Christians in the Orient," said Mr. Edde, who lives in Paris.

He was speaking a week after a bomb killed 9 worshippers and wounded 60 at a Maronite church near Beirut. Christian religious leaders have expressed indignation that authorities have reported no progress in the hunt for the bombers.

Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano said on Friday the pontiff would go ahead with the visit despite the bombing.

Former President Helou, in a front-page commentary in the French-language Beirut daily L'Orient le Jour, expressed fears the Pope's visit could lead to an explosion of violence.

He said the failure of the authorities to arrest those responsible for recent bombings against Christian targets showed that peace has not yet been established or stabilised in Lebanon.

"It is not us who oppose the very beautiful and courageous initiative which has been announced," Mr. Helou wrote.

"But we say in advance, despite all the precautions that will be taken at the official level and in the popular arena, that no one should reproach us in the world, and above all in Europe, for the violence or the disorder which can explode when we receive the Pope."

L'Orient said Lebanese troops tightened security around churches across the country on Sunday in the wake of the Feb. 27 church bombing.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indonesians hold protest against the U.S.

JAKARTA (R) — A group of Indonesian Muslim students staged a demonstration in front of the U.S. mission in North Sumatra. Condemning what it called a lack of U.S. action following the Hebron massacre, its leader said on Monday. About 400 students took part in the demonstration on Friday in front of the U.S. consulate in North Sumatra's capital of Medan, 1,400 kilometres northwest of Jakarta, said Ukok Roudy, head of the Muslim Student Association (HMI) in Medan. "The United States has boasted itself as the champion of human rights. But what has it done about the Hebron killing?" Mr. Roudy told Reuters by telephone. He said the peaceful demonstration, one in a series held by students in front of U.S. missions in Medan and Jakarta, was also aimed at urging the United States to adopt a more responsible policy on Muslims. Newspapers on Monday reported that about 2,000 Muslims also held an emotional gathering in front of a Jakarta mosque on Friday to denounce the United States and Israel for the massacre.

CIA finds trouble regaining missiles

WASHINGTON (R) — A secret programme to buy back U.S. portable Stinger missiles sent to Afghanistan rebels to fight Soviet forces during the 1980s has been plagued by failures, the Washington Post reported Monday. It quoted U.S. and Pakistani intelligence officials in a report from Pakistan as saying the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has bought back only a fraction of the estimated 1,000 Stinger missiles distributed to rebels then. The missiles can be carried by foot soldiers to shoot down low-flying planes. Congress is reported to have approved more than \$65 million in secret funds for the buyback over the past three years, about twice the original U.S. cost of the missiles, the newspaper said. It quoted the intelligence officials as saying the programme has quadrupled the blackmarket price of the missiles and created a cut-throat business of middlemen seeking high commissions to arrange CIA purchases from Afghan rebels.

King Fahd donates \$5 million to Bosnia

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabian King Fahd has donated \$5 million to Bosnian Muslims. The Saudi Press Agency reported. It said the donation, part of a campaign by the Saudi-owned London-based Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC) television, was to help "alleviate suffering of children in Bosnia-Herzegovina." King Fahd had made several other donations to Bosnian Muslims and Saudi Arabia's public and private aid to fellow Muslims in Bosnia over the past year is estimated at more than \$150 million.

Landslide crushes 6 girls in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Six girls, three of them sisters, were crushed by a huge limestone boulder that fell on them as they dug for clay beneath it, authorities said Sunday. The girls, aged 4-17, were collecting a kind of clay used for making house paint in rural parts of southern Egypt. Civil defence rescuers worked for five hours Saturday before they could excavate the bodies from the rubble in Rayayna village near Sohag, an industrial centre 385 kilometres south of Cairo. The sisters were aged four, five, and 17. Their three friends were six, 14 and 15. Last December, more than 35 people died in an avalanche in a poor Cairo neighbourhood.

2 held in Turkey for wounding journalist

ISTANBUL (R) — Police on Sunday arrested two men on charges of shooting and wounding a prominent sports writer and social commentator, Anatolian news agency said. Hincal Uluc, a journalist with the Sabah newspaper, was shot in the leg as he left his Istanbul home on Friday. Quoting police officials, Anatolia identified the attackers as Ibrahim Turk and Barboros Gokalan. Police said the men were arrested in Ankara and brought to Istanbul.

Kurds jailed after 4-year German trial

DUESSELDORF (R) — Two members of Turkey's militant Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) were jailed for life in Germany on Monday after a trial lasting over four years. Two other members of the group, which has waged a guerrilla war against Ankara since 1984, received stiff sentences. A court in Duesseldorf found Ali Aktas, 32, and Hasan Guler, 40, guilty of murder and attempted murder on charges linked to the deaths of two Kurds in Lebanon and others in the German cities of Hanover and Berlin in the 1980s. Selahattin Erdem, 36, was jailed for six years for membership of a terrorist group while Ali Haydar Kaytan, 41, got seven years on the same charge and for unlawful imprisonment. Federal prosecutors had described Mr. Kaytan, arrested in 1988, as one of the most powerful leaders of the separatist PKK.

France and Israel sign defence deal

PARIS (R) — France and Israel will sign an unprecedented agreement on military technology research and development this week during a visit by Defence Minister Francois Leotard, officials from both countries said on Monday. The accord, setting a framework for defence cooperation for the first time since President Charles de Gaulle imposed an arms embargo after the 1967 Middle East war, will be signed on Thursday during Mr. Leotard's three-day trip beginning on Wednesday. "It will allow the development of relations between state bodies involved in defence research. It will provide the framework for exchanges of information on specified subjects of common interest," a French official said. The official told Reuters cooperation would take place in eight areas but none would be identified publicly. An Israeli official said the agreement would "remove the last barrier to the redevelopment of close relations between the two countries."

Egyptian Islamists 'ready for enemies of Islam'

By Samia Nakhoul
Reuters

CAIRO — The group bent on destroying the Egyptian government and installing a strict Islamic state has emerged from its shadowy past, using the Hebron mosque massacre as a chance to vent its anger more openly.

"Islam has enemies, and of course the people of Islam will not stand idle. They must be prepared for them and fight them back," this is how the militant Gamaa Al Islamiyah summarises its crusade against the Egyptian government and Western powers.

In their eyes, the rulers of Egypt are "corrupt infidels who do not rule by God's revelations" and deserve to die. The United States and its ally, Israel, are plotting to destroy Islam.

Gamaa is coming out in the open and challenging the government by stepping up its raids on tourists, calling for street protests and asking foreigners to leave.

Virtually every day since a Jewish settler shot dead about 60 Palestinians praying in a mosque in the West Bank town of Hebron on Feb. 25, Islamic groups including the Gamaa have been especially vocal, vowing to avenge the "martyrs of Islam."

Diplomats say the militants have one hundred grievances for which they take revenge — for the Hebron massacre by attacking Americans and Israelis in Egypt, or for conviction of Gamaa follower Mahmoud Abu Halima by a U.S. court, or for the execution of 30 of their comrades by military courts in Egypt.

"The repercussions of the Hebron massacre are much more dangerous than the arrest of Abu Halima because it touches off the feelings and beliefs of Muslims. There must be some kind of revenge," one militant lawyer predicted.

Mahmoud Abu Halima is one of four men convicted in New York on Friday for bombing New York's World Trade Centre on Feb. 26 last year. Mr. Abu Halima and

the three co-defendants could be handed life jail terms when they are sentenced in May for the attack that killed six people and injured more than 1,000.

"If the building there was housing ideas to fight the Muslims and Islamists it is natural to have an operation against it. Islam has enemies and the people of Islam will not stand idle, they should fight back," a Gamaa preacher said.

In New York, Mr. Abu Halima was the driver and personal assistant to Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the blind spiritual leader of the Gamaa. Sheikh Abdul Rahman is being held in a federal prison on charges that he guided a conspiracy that plotted to blow up the United Nations and kill President Hosni Mubarak.

The Gamaa, grabbing the limelight of the Hebron massacre as a chance to vent its anger against a government tied to Israel by the 1979 peace treaty, incited street protests in Cairo.

As a result, tension is high in the streets and riot police are on the move ready with tear-gas, batons and shotgun pellets to disperse protesters.

"The peace accord with those Jews must be abrogated. The Jews are hypocrites," one militant preacher at a mosque in the poor area of Imbaba said.

"If they (Islamic groups) declare holy war on the basis of fighting these (Egyptian government, Americans and Israelis) the militants have the ability to fight even with stones and die."

The militant lawyer said: "There will be revenge but no one can predict what form the revenge operations will take."

"There is a lot of unease in the air. Something is stewing underground. The Hebron massacre has definitely given the militants an impetus to do something. They are inspired by it," one western diplomat said.

"The militant warnings are worrisome," he added. "There are certain trends

which want to activate the streets and take advantage of these protests to stir a confrontation with the police that will turn into a battle," Information Minister Safwat Sharif told Rose Al Yousef magazine.

Over the past month, the Gamaa has emerged from its shadowy and underground world to openly confront the government, which has repeatedly played down the role of its militants, saying they were a bunch of mercenaries that could be easily uprooted.

The Gamaa has issued 21 statements over the past month claiming responsibility for the killing of policemen and the planting of bombs in front of banks which pay interest.

It launched five attacks in one month on foreign tourists travelling on Nile cruises and on trains, compared with 11 attacks since its campaign began in October 1992.

On Friday, gunmen seriously wounded a German woman in southern Egypt when they shot at a Nile cruiser.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 723111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Envoy Special Magazine
19:00 News in French
19:15 Le Monde Fantastique Des Animaux
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
21:30 The Respected Family
22:00 News in English
22:30 The Cape Rebel
23:50 Night Court

PRAYER TIMES

04:35 Fajr
05:52 (Sunrise) Duha
11:47 Dhuhur
15:06 Asr
17:51 Maghrib
18:57 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swatfah, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 612785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624940
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637441
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 626543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assuan International Church Tel. 625236
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675641
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Temperatures tend to rise slightly with winds becoming northwesterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 4/10

Aqaba 12/22
Deserts 3/12
Jordan Valley 9/20

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 8, Aqaba 20. Humidity reading: Amman 93 per cent, Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Huleisa 819220
Dr. Jamal Murqqa 776149
Dr. Jamal Jbara 847351
Dr. Isam Al Asmar 880504
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778136
Al Asama pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636740
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmelani pharmacy 637940
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najih pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qantu (—)
Alqub pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Zivad Jaitem (—)

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 63041
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630221
Hotel Complaints 630800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 771111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 626381

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 642816
Al-Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmiciani 6641714
Shmiciani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 849445
Al-Mushter Hospital 672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Army, Marfa 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 686100
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900561
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)27778
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)271700

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)214111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
03:55 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:35 Damascus (RJ)
07:45 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
09:10 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:25 Agaba (RJ)
09:50 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:20 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
16:50 Frankfurt (RJ)
16:55 Cairo (RJ)
17:30 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
04:20 Vienna (OS)
16:45 Rome (AZ)
18:05 Paris, Beirut (AF)
19:45 Beirut (ME)

20:00 Aden (TY)
06:30 Bucharest (RO)
01:15 Amsterdam, Damascus (KL)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
07:00 Agaba (RJ)
08:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:00 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:15 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:35 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
11:45 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
12:45 London (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
20:00 Colombo, Singapore (RJ)
21:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:30 Colombo, Singapore (RJ)
22:30 Jeddah (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
13:50 Vienna (OS)
17:45 Dubai (AZ)
21:00 Aden (TY)
02:15 Bucharest (RO)
02:15 Amsterdam (KL)

HJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 550/650
Banana 600
Banana (Mukannar) 600
Cabbage 70/40
Carrot 170/120
Cauliflower 220/150
Clementine 200/150
Cucumbers (large) 200/150
Cucumbers (small) 350/220
Eggplant 280/120
Garlic 1100/900
Lemon 150/110
Marrow (large) 180/100
Marrow (small) 320/220
Olives (green) 700/500
Orange 540/200
Onion (dry) 350/300
Onion (green) 250/180
Peas 320/220
Pepper (hot) 480/340
Pepper (sweet) 400/400
Potato 290/180
Radish 140/80
Tomato 270/180
Spinach 170/100
String beans 1200/900

هذا من الأمل



AN IFAR FOR THE EXCELLING: His Majesty King Hussein Monday hosts an iftar in honour of excelling students from Jordanian universities as well as the winners of the State Merit Awards. The iftar, held at Basman Palace, was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the King's advisors, Chief Chamberlain Prince

Ra'd Ben Zeid, Private Chamberlain Prince Ali Ben Nayef, His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, Deputy Prime Minister and Higher Education Minister Saeed Al Tal and Culture Minister Amin Mahmoud. The King and the guests performed Al Maghreb prayers together (Petra photo)

Ministry investigates drug safety after reports of fatal side effects

By Jennifer Hamarneh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Ministry of Health is investigating the validity of reports in the foreign media that an antibiotic compound used to treat urinary tract infections and bronchitis may have caused the death of hundreds who took the drug over a long period of time, Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas said Monday.

The brand names for the drug in question are Septrin, made by Britain's Wellcome Foundation, and Bactrim, made by the Swiss-based pharmaceutical company, Hoffman La Roche.

Septrin and Bactrim have been used in Jordan for many years for the successful treatment of various infections, said Dr. Malhas. But reports that the drug has serious and even fatal side effects warrant immediate investigation, added the minister.

He said the ministry has contacted the World Health Organisation (WHO), the health attaché at the Jordanian Embassy in London, as well as the National Scientific Committee and the Scientific Committee of Internists, which is a branch of the Jordan Medical Association, to provide all relevant information concerning the

drug. The Sunday Times of London reported on Feb. 27 that "research — largely ignored by the medical profession — shows that one of the product's ingredients was unnecessary for it to be effective in most cases. It is this element which is held responsible for the most serious side effects, such as fatal blood reactions."

The British weekly said that "problems have stemmed from the fact that the drug is composed of two rival antibiotics," put together by Wellcome and Hoffman La Roche in the 1960s.

According to the report, "the Wellcome drug, called trimethoprim, is relatively safe and effective, while sulphamethoxazole, from Roche, poses significant risks."

A Jordanian professor of pharmacy, who preferred anonymity, told the Jordan Times that the antibiotic is taken by a large number of people in Jordan. He added that the drug is also prescribed for children as it is available in suspension (liquid) as well as tablet forms. The professor said that about one year ago, Dar Al Dawa (DAD) started manufacturing trimethoprim alone and selling it under the brand name Trimidar. The com-

pany also exports the drug, he said. He added that DAD also manufactures the compound antibiotic.

According to the professor, Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Company (APM), a Jordanian firm, manufactures, sells locally and exports the compound form of the antibiotic containing the controversial sulphamethoxazole, as does the Jordan Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Company (JPM).

The professor concurs with the Ministry of Health that scientific evidence of side effects must be proved before determining whether the drug should be banned. He said if the compound antibiotic begins to be lifted from markets in Europe, then the same measures will have to apply to Jordan.

The Sunday Times said that although Septrin and Bactrim are still widely prescribed, "especially in developing countries," some experts see the mounting evidence of negative side effects as alarming.

If investigations confirm that Septrin and Bactrim have caused fatal or major side effects, the drug will be immediately banned from usage and import in Jordan, said Dr. Malhas.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Syria

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday sent a cable to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, congratulating him in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on Syria's national day. King Hussein wished Mr. Assad good health and happiness and the Syrian people further progress and prosperity.

Majali meets with writers' federation head

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday received at the prime ministry Jordanian Writer's Federation President Dia'eddin Al Rifa'i and the new administrative board of the federation. Discussion at the meeting focused on the federation's ambitions and plans and its role in serving the cultural movements at the local and Arab levels. Dr. Majali voiced appreciation of the federation's role in promoting cultural movement in Jordan. The meeting was attended by Minister of State Fawwaz Abul Ghanam.

Minister receives new Korean envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of State for

Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan Monday received at the foreign ministry newly-appointed South Korean ambassador to Jordan Oh Chung-II who presented his credentials to Mr. Hassan. Mr. Oh succeeds Hahn-Choon Lee who ended his tour of duty in Jordan last month.

High wheat consumption recorded

AMMAN (Petra) — Recent sharp increases in the country's wheat consumption are the result of population growth and waste, according to a statistical bulletin issued Monday by the Ministry of Supply. In 1988, Jordan consumed an estimated 416,000 tonnes of wheat, the bulletin said, but in 1993, the nation consumed 627,000. The bulletin said the availability of subsidised bread has prompted some people to use the staple as animal feed. According to the bulletin, in 1993 wheat consumption was 97,047 tonnes higher than in 1992; a clear indicator, said the bulletin, that bread is being wasted. The bulletin said Jordan last year purchased 672,860 tonnes of wheat, up from 602,910 tonnes in 1992, noting that most of the wheat was imported and cost the country significantly in hard currency.

Government plans no across-the-board pay raise for civil servants — Gammoh

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government is not considering any pay raise for civil servants and is not aware of reports that Parliament members and senior government officials were poised to get a substantial hike in allowances and salaries, Minister of Finance Sami Gammoh said Monday.

Mr. Gammoh categorically denied reports in the local press that the government was studying a pay increase similar to that it offered to civil servants last year.

"There is no plan for any such raise," Mr. Gammoh told the Jordan Times, describing the reports as unfounded.

The minister said he was not aware of a purported recommendation of a government committee studying the issue that the allowances for members of Parliament and senior government officials be raised.

"I have not seen the report of the committee," he said. "As far as I know, there are no such plans until now."

Another member of the Cabinet said: "We really don't know where such re-

ports come from. The committee (studying civil servants' salaries) has not completed its work and the government is not yet privy to its recommendations. If indeed there are any along the lines suggested in the reports."

According to the reports, members of Parliament will get an increase of JD400, making their monthly allowance JD1,000, and senior officials of the rank of secretary-generals of ministries, including heads of government departments, will get a monthly increase of JD300.

The reports suggested that an across-the-board raise of JD22 for all categories of government servants and public sector employees was being considered as the proposed raise.

While denying the report, Mr. Gammoh, however, affirmed that the government-appointed committee was considering an efficiency-oriented incentive programme for civil servants.

"We have been studying such a plan for some time now," Mr. Gammoh said. "This would only involve those civil servants who prove their efficiency and productivity."

According to the minister,



Sami Gammoh

it will be unproductive to offer a uniform salary raise to the public sector since it would discourage "productive and efficient employees" when they find "everyone getting the same raise regardless of their standard of work and productivity."

"We, as a government, have a duty towards encouraging them to continue their productive and efficient work and set a model for others," Mr. Gammoh said. Mr. Gammoh declined to give details of the efficiency-oriented pay raises, pointing out that the committee had not completed its work.

Other officials said the orientation was towards civil servants who have proven re-

cords of efficiency as well as those who work in rural areas where the relative luxuries and better living conditions are lacking.

In many cases, the officials noted, many civil servants asked to move out of Amman to family obligations, health services, schooling of children etc.

"Everyone has one excuse or another, making it very difficult for department heads to handle such cases," said an official. "If no one wants to go and serve in the outlying regions, how are we going to offer services to residents there?"

"We have to encourage people to drop their reluctance to leave Amman and other major towns and take up posts in the rural regions," said the official. "An extra allowance might help many to make up their minds and accept postings there, and this is part of the incentive programme that the government is considering."

In 1993, the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker offered a uniform JD15-JD20 pay raise to all civil servants and security personnel, including the Armed Forces. The total number of civil servants is

estimated at around 400,000. The raise offered in 1993 increased government spending by JD70 million for the year.

It was the first such raise for more than seven years. Under the economic restructuring programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the government had frozen all wage hikes.

An international consultant who works closely with the World Bank and the IMF said the internal watchdogs did not have any problem with the government approach to civil servant salaries as long as it achieves the targets outlined in the restructuring programme. "The government had all the leeway in its priorities of expenditures as long as the orientation remains towards not breaching the limits (on spending) and follows a course towards efficiency," said the consultant.

"After all, it is the country and its people who benefit from improved performance of all sectors, and this in turn makes it much easier for the IMF and the World Bank to deal with the government and its external obligations," added the consultant, who preferred anonymity.

Building starts drop because of fee increases — HUDD official

AMMAN (Petra) — The drop in construction starts in the Kingdom has been attributed to the increased cost of various fees imposed on building projects during 1993.

Director General of the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) Youssef Hiyasat Monday said that in 1993 the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) issued licences for 14,285 projects to construct a total of 3.07 million square metres of buildings, which was 47 per cent of the total area built in 1992.

Mr. Hiyasat said many con-

tractors and private citizens obtained building licences during 1992 after learning that the fees would rise sharply in 1993.

Also, in the last two months of 1993 there was a near halt in the construction business in Jordan because speculation about an imminent settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict was widespread at the time, said Mr. Hiyasat.

He said the last months of 1993 registered a 40 per cent drop in construction operations compared with the same period the previous year.

Private universities barred from advertising

AMMAN (Petra) — Private universities, which came under fire Monday for neglecting some academic standards, will be barred from advertising in the media to attract student applications. Minister of Higher Education Saeed Al Tal Monday said that some private universities have been lax in abiding by regulations involving the assessment of students' academic performance and criticised those universities, which, he said, resort to commercial advertising in order to attract undergraduates.

Addressing a meeting in his office of presidents of private

universities, Dr. Tal said universities are the highest educational institutions in the country and any shirking of responsibility would be considered an academic and national crime.

There is no room for students who fail to live up to the academic standards required by the university board, and such students definitely do not deserve to obtain university degrees, he said.

Dr. Tal stressed that as some of the finest institutions in the country, private universities should refrain from advertising since this is not in line with academic norms. He said the

ministry was circulating instructions barring all universities from advertising in the media in order to attract more students.

Promising the ministry's support of private universities' academic endeavours, the minister urged the presidents to coordinate their educational programmes to benefit the entire higher education system in the country.

He suggested that university boards temporarily freeze staff promotions until a set of regulations by the Council of Higher Education is issued.

Mideast peace process bursts on stage in Jordan

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — It's showtime in Jordan, where once-taboo politics have burst on stage in an unflattering and rib-tickling look at the state of Middle East peace talks. "Clinton," "Rabin," "Arafat," and "King Hussein" are among the characters in a one-hour satire reflecting popular scepticism about what is depicted as negotiations between a strong Israel and weak Arabs.

U.S. President Bill Clinton, draped in the stars and stripes, dances onto the stage as a chorus of men ridicule the new U.S.-shaped world order emerging from the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chief Yasser Arafat, once sworn enemies, haggle over terms for Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho.

Rabin tells Arafat that Israel will let him hoist a five-by-five centimetre Palestinian flag at a border post linking Jordan and Jericho — famed for its bananas — if he accepts a five square kilometre Jericho.

An astonished Arafat shouts: "You want me to have self-rule on a banana factory waving a bikini as a flag? And if I sleep there, my head will be in Jordan and my feet will be in Israel."

The satire "Ahlan Peace" (welcome Peace) is being staged at the Regency Palace Hotel for Amman's glitterati. It's a sell-out each night and audiences, including senior officials, diplomats and intelli-

gence men, roll in their seats at the jokes.

The staging of the play — and the effort to end decades of Arab-Israeli conflict — reflect a changing Middle East. The political satire is the fourth by Nabil Sawalha since Jordan began easing censorship of the media and arts four years ago.

He appears as an actor along with co-writer Hisham Yanis. "We are talking about peace in the sense that we support it," Sawalha says. But he adds: "We are a bit sceptical about what is happening."

The mood captured by the two popular television comedians reflects the uncertainty raised by an Israeli-PLO self-rule deal and the failure of more than two years of Arab-Israeli talks to produce any major results.

The art reflects the reality — the gloom surrounding what is seen as uncompromising Israeli positions forced on Arabs with U.S. pressure, tilting the balance toward opponents of talks.

In one scene, radical Palestinians slam moderate Palestine Liberation Organisation leaders for selling out their people.

In another, Arafat and Rabin discuss Palestinian self-rule arrangements for the Gaza Strip and Jericho that were supposed to emerge from the accord signed last September.

"I know why you want borders. You want to make a Palestinian state," says Rabin. Arafat, in traditional green military fatigues and chequered headscarf, replies: "So what Rabin. What are you afraid of? We do not have water, or chemicals, or atomic



Nabil Sawalha (left) and Hisham Yanis in a scene from "Ahlan Peace" playing at the Regency Hotel in Amman

bombs, or sewage and telephones, we even do not have water to wash with."

A jittery Rabin says: "But you have a more serious atomic bomb ... the Palestinian breeding bomb ... Palestinians will keep breeding and Israel will eventually be lost in Palestine's nursery."

The play also ventures into potentially divisive territory — relations between the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Jordan, where Palestinians are about half of the nearly four million population.

Jordanian-PLO ties were frosty after the self-rule deal with Israel was reached in sec-

ret talks without consulting Jordan. It raised doubts about future Jordanian economic and political links with the West Bank, which it ruled until lost to Israel in the 1967 Middle East war.

In a satirical telephone conversation, Arafat, known for never committing himself, asks King Hussein about a future confederation between Jordan and Palestine.

The King, who believes the idea must wait until Palestinians can determine their future, cuts him off: "But you are still wearing a diaper." Arafat laughingly says "but we are dry now."

The play opens with a fight between Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam in the biblical story of creation shared by Christians, Jews and Muslims.

"We want to show that man's destiny lies in his silliness or wisdom, in his magnanimity or his pettiness," Sawalha said. "This is very relevant to peace and to the Arab-Israeli struggle between people who are of the same origin."

He said: "Peace is the theme now prevalent in our lives and people expect us to reflect their feelings, we decided to tackle it despite its slightly undefined dimensions."

Settler families quit Kiryat Arba

(Continued from page 1)

in Kiryat Arba," he said. "They said they'd prefer to live in the streets of Jerusalem than return to Kiryat Arba," he said.

On Monday, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, issued leaflets warning that Kiryat Arba and four other settlements are not dismantled by March 15, the Israeli residents will not "enjoy the luxury of sleep in their homes or a feeling of safety on the road."

"We have chosen our targets and our living martyrs have been instructed to carry out the suicide operations," it said.

The leaflet, issued by Hamas' armed wing, Izzedine

Al Qassam, threatened retaliation for the Feb. 25 massacre.

Hamas has decided on a five-stage revenge plan, "and each stage will make the Israeli people and the settlers cry in blood for their dead," the leaflet said.

Israel's army chief of staff, Ehud Barak, said last week that warnings had been received about possible reprisal actions by Palestinian militants.

Hamas named five settlements and said its residents would be singled out for attacks if they did not leave their homes by March 15. The settlements were Kiryat Arba as well as Gush Katif, Kedumim, Tekoa and Ariel.

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Araia press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ "Installation" inspired by Arzak by artist Andreja Kuhnecic at Darat Al Fann of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Lawweideh (7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.). Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 54 contemporary Arab artists (Tel. 643251/2).
- ★ Art exhibition by artists Widad Al Orfali and Abdul Hussein Twaif at the Orfali Art Gallery in Um Uthaina (Tel. 626932).
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Ghassan Ayasrah at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition by artist Shaker Al Girmi entitled "Studies in the Jordanian Environment" at the Phoenix Art Gallery for Art

WHAT'S GOING ON

- and Culture.
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by several artists at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of Jordanian products at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of works of art by the Arab Centre for Vocational Training at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Jalal Arikat at Ab'ad Art Gallery (10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. except Fridays).
- ★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Fadel Mahmoud at the Alfa Art Gallery (8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.).
- ★ Exhibition of medical herbs at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).

- ★ Wood carving exhibition by artist Samer Ousama at the French Cultural Centre.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

- ★ Musical performance by the students of Amman National School at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

ABC WEEKLY NEWS

- ★ ABC Weekly News Highlights and the MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour at 2:30 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL

- ★ Poetry recital by Arab poet Abdul Wahab Al Bayati at the Arab Forum at 8:00 p.m.

Israel sends proposals

(Continued from page 1)

"Disarming the settlers in Al Khalil (Hebron) is essential. The presence of the settlements in Al Khalil is dangerous. This is why the Israeli government should take quick and effective steps to confront the danger of settlers," Mr. Arafat said.

Israel has rejected the idea of an armed international presence.

The row over the killings has held up the PLO-Israeli negotiations on details of the agreement for limited Palestinian self-rule which they signed last year.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said the Security Council has taken a long time to pass a resolution condemning the Hebron attack. He said he hoped it would not be delayed further.

"The matter is too dangerous to be treated in an emotional way. It requires well-studied and well-defined procedures," Mr. Musa added.

Mr. Rabin warned Monday that any delay in reviving peace talks heightens the risk of "crises" striking again. Mr. Rabin, grappling with the violent aftermath of the Hebron massacre, spoke on Israeli radio.

Mr. Rabin stressed that "any delay... plays into the hands of the Palestinian terrorists" seeking revenge for the massacre and "opens possibilities for the crazies or a crazy on the Israeli side" to further damage the peace process.

Israel has offered to speed up implementation of the Sept. 13 peace accord with the PLO.

The withdrawal of Israeli troops "could be implemented in six weeks, instead of four months" as stipulated in the accord. Gad Ben-Ari, Mr. Rabin's spokesman, told the Associated Press.

But Mr. Rabin stressed Monday that he is not prepared to renegotiate the accord.

"If we have to renegotiate an agreement... because of problems one side has over one event or another, there's no reason to continue talks," he said.

"You have to honour agreements and each side has to keep the commitments it made," he stressed.

Mr. Ben-Ari said there have been telephone and fax contacts over the last few days between Israeli and PLO officials "at various levels and in various forms."

"The Americans are heavily involved and the Egyptians are trying to help... there are intensive efforts being made and we hope the negotiations will resume in the shortest possible time."

Mr. Rabin met with Israeli negotiators Sunday to find ways of getting autonomy talks back on track amid reports the PLO was softening its position.

"Even though some PLO officials have sent contradictory messages, there's a will on the Palestinian side to resume the talks," the Haaretz daily quoted Israeli officials as saying.

Israeli-Arab team in Syria

(Continued from page 1)

nians, headed by Mr. Darawsh, had arrived to offer condolences to Mr. Assad.

The dispatch made no mention of Mr. Darawsh's profession, or the fact that all members of the group hold Israeli passports.

After a brief rest at the hotel, the group was taken in three buses, escorted by carloads of security officials, on a sightseeing tour of Damascus.

The tour featured the Monument to the Unknown Soldier, the Omayyad Mosque whose foundation dates to the 8th century, and the tomb of Saladin, who recaptured Jerusalem from Richard the Lionheart in the 12th century.

Syrians shopping in the Hamidiyyeh Bazaar, where the

The PLO has insisted that Jewish settlements in or next to Arab population centres should be dismantled. It was not clear whether that remained a demand.

At a cabinet meeting Sunday, half of Mr. Rabin's 14 ministers backed pulling out the 400 religious settlers living in Hebron, who have become the focus of the emotive settlements issue.

Mr. Rabin blocked a vote on the issue and deferred discussion until next week.

He opposes dismantling any of the 144 settlements, where some 120,000 Jews live alongside two million Palestinians, because it could be seen as caving into the PLO.

Mr. Rabin's coalition only has a one-vote majority in the 120-member Knesset and he is leary of making concessions that could trigger a right-wing backlash.

But he is under pressure on Hebron, where officials fear the settlers are in danger.

Settlers' leaders warned that thousands of sympathisers would descend on Hebron to resist any attempt to remove the Jewish enclave.

Baruch Marzel, leader of the extremist Kach movement, said attacks on Arabs were likely if that happened.

He told the Yedioth Ahronoth daily: "People could carry out very grave acts, of the type (Baruch) Goldstein did."

Mr. Marzel is on the run with three other Kach leaders after the government last week launched a crackdown on radical settlers, ordering six men arrested and 18 others disarmed.

Former chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren issued a religious ruling Sunday that "requires us to resist it to the death, all of us, every Jew," if the Hebron settlers are removed. But he forbade firing on soldiers.

PLO negotiator Nabil al-Nahhas said that Britain and Norway were willing to join an unspecified "international presence" to protect Palestinians in the occupied territories.

After arriving in Cairo to brief Mr. Arafat on his talks in the United States, Britain and Norway, Dr. Shaath said Norway had given orders that planes be ready to move as soon as the United Nations passed a resolution on the plan.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd had said Britain "completely agreed... to take part in the presence," he added.

Dr. Shaath told reporters he learnt of Norway's position from Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal. Earlier on Sunday, Mr. Godal told a news conference with Dr. Shaath in Oslo only that Norway would heed any requests once the PLO and Israel agreed.

Dr. Shaath said the United States had indicated it agreed to an international presence in principle. "They want some time to study the steps and the form of the proposed presence and to agree with Israel on the issue," he added.

Palestinian killed in Hebron

(Continued from page 1)

by flying glass. The man fled towards Khan Younis in a car bearing number plates issued to Israelis.

Israeli troops, on high alert for retaliatory attacks since the massacre, conducted wide searches for the man, the radio said.

In Jerusalem Saturday, Palestinian resistance hero Salim Zurai, who served 23 years in prison, called on the Palestinians in the occupied territories to take up arms against Israel.

"The settlers and the occupation don't know any-

thing but the language of bullets," he told a crowd, which later protested for several hours.

The rainswept territories observed a general strike called to mark the Palestinian uprising launched in 1987.

In a related development, the finance ministry set rates for compensating families of victims of the Hebron massacre of Feb. 25, Israeli radio said. Each family will receive between 85,000 to 210,000 shekels (\$30,000 to \$60,000) depending on the size of their household.

In movies and politics, Mercuri was a star

By Stephen Weeks
Reuter

ATHENS — Melina Mercuri, who died on Sunday, delighted in exploiting her role as socialist culture minister and movie star to bring Greece's ancient heritage and modern struggles to the notice of a wider audience.

A heavy smoker, she died, aged 68, in New York's Memorial Hospital from complications following an operation in February for lung cancer.

She became an international star with her role in "Never on Sunday," a 1960 film that also helped to launch Greece's post-war tourist boom with its image of a sunny, carefree country.

A tall, natural blonde with green eyes, she was born on Oct. 18, 1925, to a prominent political family dominated by her grandfather Spyros Mercuris, Athens mayor for 30 years.

She graduated with honours from Athens Drama School and her film career took off in 1955 when she won the Best Actress Award at the Cannes film festival for her role in "Stella."

Throughout a long and varied career, she mixed her role as actress with that of dedicated socialist politician. She was well-known for her ferocious denunciations of the military junta which seized power and ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974.

As socialist culture minister from 1981 to 1989, she emerged as a passionate missionary for Greece's heritage, she took over the ministry again in October 1993 when the socialists returned to power.

Her most widely-publicised campaign was for the return of the Parthenon Marbles, some of ancient Greece's finest classical sculptures. They were stripped from the Parthenon Temple in the 19th century by a British lord and are in the British Museum.

"A room will always remain empty in the Acropolis Museum awaiting their return. The marbles belong here," she said.

She also led a failed campaign to promote Greece as host for the 1996 summer Olympics, the centenary of the modern games which were revived in Athens in 1896.

Always ready to mix theatrics with her politics, she went on television in a long blue dress and a white-feathered turban, Greece's national colours, to sing the Olympic anthem and promote Greece's bid.

Ms. Mercuri always projected a strong pride in her

homeland and heritage. "I did not love Greece so much I would be lazy, egocentric and a coward," she once said.

She met American film director Jules Dassin at the Cannes Film Festival and married him in 1966. He directed her in "Never on Sunday" and she was nominated for an Oscar for her role as a warm-hearted, carefree prostitute.

A 1967 Broadway musical called "Illya Daria" based on "Never on Sunday," earned enthusiastic reviews in New York. She had leading roles in over 70 films and theatrical productions.

One New York critic wrote: "Mercuri has the sun-bleached good looks of Ingrid Bergman, the glamour of Lauren Bacall and the passion of Anna Magnani."

Ms. Mercuri's own view, mixed with her renowned blunt humour, was: "I fell in love with the camera and I think the camera fell in love with me but I still think my mouth is too big."

Her films and songs were banned by the 1967-74 junta and a warrant was issued for her arrest. Her speeches and demonstrations around the world against the junta cost Ms. Mercuri her citizenship, restored only after the dictatorship fell.

It was during this period that she allied herself with the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) of fellow exile Andreas Papandreu.

Ms. Mercuri often despaired at the lack of concern shown by fellow socialist ministers over the importance of Greece's cultural heritage.

"There were very few people in PASOK who could listen to me for more than 10 minutes," she once said. "I used to tell them: Give me the money you spent on a fighter plane and I'll build an opera house, they didn't understand."

Ms. Mercuri bought her first house in 1986, on the central Athens hill of Lycabettus, overlooking the city and her beloved Parthenon.

"After all these years Dassin has an office in which to sit and write his scripts, and I can practice interior designing, read books and watch old movies on the video," she said.

She went to New York in 1989 to be treated for an undisclosed medical problem, later known to be the first signs of lung cancer.

A heavy smoker to the end, she said on return from one trip to New York: "The American doctors said I should quit smoking but what do they know. Give me a cigarette, I am back in Greece."

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Feb. 25 killing of at least 60 Palestinians at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron has brought back memories of past tragedies for both the Palestinians and the Israelis. Muslims and Jews claim the city holy in their faiths and have fought over it for years.

In many ways, Hebron has been a litmus test for all good and evil that can develop between Arabs (both Christian and Muslim) and Jews.

Hebron, one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns in Palestine, is widely believed to have been inhabited by the ancient Canaanites as early as 2000 BC.

The origins of Hebron's Old Testament name — Kiryat Arba — (or the village of the four) has been the topic of heated disagreements among students of history.

The main dispute amongst scholars is over whether the number four refers to the four patriarchs believed to be buried there or to the four Canaanite tribes that settled the town in pre-biblical times. Most Muslim and Jewish scholars tend to support the theory of the four patriarchs since, according to both faiths, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, as well as Adam and Eve are buried in the city.

More secular scholars tend to argue that the reference is to the Canaanite tribes. Archaeologists have discovered digs at Al Rumeid Mountain, which indicates that Hebron was inhabited by Canaanites (the most ancient people of the holy land) as early as 2000 BC.

But Jewish tradition has it that Abraham chose the Cave of Makhpelah as the burial grounds for some members of his family because he knew it to be the burial site of Adam and Eve, a theory which Muslims also believe in.

An envoy of Moses coming from Transjordan described Hebron as the "land of milk and honey" to the Jewish prophet after returning from an exploratory expedition. According to the Book of Joshua (10:37), in 1200 BC Moses' follower Joshua invaded and destroyed the city and killed all its inhabitants.

Both Muslim and Jewish religions maintain that King Solomon laid the ground work for the Haram Al Khalil. The oldest remaining walls, however, date to Herod's epoch.

In 70 AD, the Jews revolted against the Romans and were expelled from Hebron until the city came under Muslim rule and was again



Arab and Jewish peace activists demand the removal of settlements from the occupied territories during a demonstration to condemn the Hebron massacre (AFP photo)

Hebron massacre brings back memories of past tragedies

open to all. Haram Al Khalil was converted into a Byzantine church in 570 AD by the Byzantine rulers of Palestine.

In the 7th century, at the advent of Islam, the church was converted into a mosque which was again transformed into a church in 1099 by invading Crusaders.

The newly built church replaced both the mosque and the adjacent synagogue which marked the centre of the Haram at the time. After the Crusaders took over of the city, Jews and Muslims were banned from it.

After the defeat of the Crusaders by Saladin in the 12th century, the church was reconverted into a mosque. It was only after Muslim rule was restored under the Mamluk Sultans (1248-1517) that Jews and Muslims were allowed to return to the city. In 1380, another adjoining mosque, known as the "Djaouliyyeh", was built by the Mamluks. Today, this mosque remains the most common point of entry into the Haram.

But despite the common heritage of expulsion and re-entry into their holy shrines, many religious Jews continue to view Abraham's biblical purchase of the Cave of Makhpelah, which also con-

tains Al Haram Al Ibrahim as well as the rest of Hebron as exclusively Jewish for all time.

Arabs contest this claim and thus Hebron and the places of prayer in Al Haram Al Ibrahim have been the site of interfaith rivalry for thousands of years.

The Haram looks more like a huge fortress than a place of worship. Rectangular in shape, the building is the most outstanding structure in all of Hebron to this day.

Today's Hebronites are known for their frugality and keen sense of mercantilism. Many among the population can trace their family lineage to ancient Arab tribes that have settled in Palestine since biblical times. Still, other Hebronites can trace family lineage to the Crusaders who held the town in 1100 AD and changed its name to Castellum.

The modern town of Hebron is centre for trade and small industry. It is renowned for its grape harvest and durable stones, from which most houses in the West Bank are still built. Hebron has some 65,000 inhabitants. Centred around some 50 villages, Hebron remains home to some of the most orthodox

religious groups on either side of the Palestinian-Israeli divide.

The modern Jewish settlement that carries the biblical name of Kiryat Arba is located in the middle of the city. Today there are at least three dozen settlements in the Hebron area. The settlers in Kiryat Arba number between 5,000 to 10,000 and are mostly American-Jews.

The building of Jewish settlements in the Hebron area was first officially sanctioned by former Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Dayan on June 8, 1967, during a tour of the West Bank. In his memoirs, he wrote that "during that tour, I gave a policy directive... to act in accordance with our intentions to establish permanent Jewish settlements in the Mount Hebron and Jerusalem areas."

Unlike in the West Bank city of Nablus, where the indigenous Jewish community continued to live after Israel was created in 1947, the small community of indigenous Hebronite Jews left the city.

It is Kiryat Arba that Baruch Goldstein, the man who shot into a crowd of worshippers on Feb. 25 in the Ibrahim Mosque, called home.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

TENDER NOTICE ISSUED BY THE "SPECIAL TENDER COMMITTEE" FOR THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

TENDER NUMBER 5/94 DIGITAL TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

The "Special Tender Committee" for the National Telecommunications Programme announces Tender No. 5/94 "Digital Transmission Equipment".

This project is one of the main parts of the National Telecommunications Programme which aims to expand the Jordanian Telephone Network.

SCOPE OF WORK

The above mentioned tender (on turn-key basis) consists of design, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of the following:

- A) (70) Optical-fiber links with a total length of 750 km.
- B) Optical Terminals using PDH & SDH technology
- C) (13) Microwave links including terminal & multiplex equipment
- D) (13) Microwave towers
- E) Supervisory equipment using TMN system.

In addition to that, spare parts, civil works needed for cables laying and towers' erection and training of TCC staff in operation and maintenance are required.

Specialised companies are hereby invited to submit their tenders in accordance with terms, conditions and technical specifications contained in the tender documents.

Tenderers are requested to submit in addition to price offer a financing proposal to finance the foreign currency portion of the contract to be awarded.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Tenderers are requested to submit their tenders in three separate sealed envelopes as follows:

- FIRST: Containing the technical offer
- SECOND: Containing the "Price Only" on cash basis offer
- THIRD: Containing price plus financing offer i.e.:
 - a) Price based on financing.
 - b) The financing offer

Technical offers will be opened and evaluated first. Price and financing offers for technically acceptable offers will then be opened.

Tender documents may be obtained from Tender Section/TCC headquarters, Tower Building as from Tuesday, March 8, against a non-refundable fee of (1500) one-thousand and five hundred Jordanian dinars.

Tenders, accompanied by a tender guarantee, are to be submitted in English not later than 12 a.m. local time on Saturday 18, June, 1994.

The technical offers will be opened in the presence of tenderers' representatives, who wish to attend, on the same date.

Note: The last date for purchasing the tender documents is April, 20, 1994.

Chairman of Special Tenders Committee
Ahmad Al-Nawawi

TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

TENDER NOTICE ISSUED BY THE "SPECIAL TENDER COMMITTEE" FOR THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

TENDER NUMBER 4/94 DIGITAL SWITCHING EQUIPMENT

The "Special Tender Committee" for the National Telecommunications Programme announces Tender No. 4/94 "Digital Switching Equipment".

This project is one of the main parts of the National Telecommunications Programme which aims to expand the Jordanian Telephone Network.

SCOPE OF WORK

The above mentioned tender (on turn-key basis) consists of design, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of the following:

- A) (21) Main exchanges
- B) (80) Remote Subscriber Units (RSU's)
- C) One training model
- D) One repair centre
- E) One network management centre
- F) Related power, air-conditioning & fire protection.

In addition to that, spare parts and training of TCC staff on operation and maintenance are required.

Specialised companies are hereby invited to submit their tenders in accordance with terms, conditions and technical specifications contained in the tender documents.

Tenderers are requested to submit in addition to price offer a financing proposal to finance the foreign currency portion of the contract to be awarded.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Tenderers are requested to submit their tenders in three separate sealed envelopes as follows:

- FIRST: Containing the technical offer
- SECOND: Containing the "Price Only" on cash basis offer
- THIRD: Containing price plus financing offer i.e.:
 - a) Price based on financing.
 - b) The financing offer

Technical offers will be opened and evaluated first. Price and financing offers for technically acceptable offers will then be opened.

Tender documents may be obtained from Tender Section/TCC headquarters, Tower Building as from Tuesday, March 8, against a non-refundable fee of (2000) two-thousand Jordanian dinars.

Tenders, accompanied by a tender guarantee, are to be submitted in English not later than 12 a.m. local time on Wednesday 15, June, 1994.

The technical offers will be opened in the presence of tenderers' representatives, who wish to attend, on the same date.

Note: The last date for purchasing the tender documents is April, 20, 1994.

Chairman of Special Tenders Committee
Ahmad Al-Nawawi

Poland to join Hungary in applying for EU membership

have a supply of labour when they need it. As a result, many Japanese workers are kept on payrolls even when they have little to do.

Asian unemployment figures, have been as low as Singapore's 1.9 per cent in 1991 and Hong Kong's two per cent in 1992.

In the republics of the former Soviet Union, the ILO estimates that the real jobs rate may be as high as 10 per cent. Managers of state-owned enterprises prefer to put workers on unpaid leave or shorten the work week rather than lay them off, the ILO said.

among the wealthiest in the world, eastern European states face much more difficult problems in improving their economies to the standards required for EU membership.

They are still repairing the damage done to their economic systems during the decades of communist rule that followed World War II.

Poland and Hungary have association agreements with the EU which provide for limited trade and aid but they consider themselves more advanced in economic terms than most of their neighbours in eastern Europe.

million in aid Kuwait plans for Palestinian development.

Sheikh Humadhi said: "The role of the fund after liberation is much more important now than it used to be, as part of the foreign policy of Kuwait, because we still, as Kuwait, have many issues that have not been settled yet with the Iraqi regime and we still need their support and understanding of other countries."

The problems with Iraq include Iraq's refusal to abandon its territorial claim on the emirate and the absence of hundreds of Kuwaitis believed still held by Baghdad, despite Iraqi denials.

Sunday, Mr. Kovalko said Ukraine had used about 280 million cubic metres over the previous 24 hours. Gazprom said Sunday it had cut daily shipments by 80 million cubic metres on top of a previous cut of 50 million.

Mr. Kovalko said Ukraine could count on 200 million cubic metres a day — 50 million from its own output, 50 million from Russia and 100 million from Ukraine's underground storages.

Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency quoted a Gazprom official as saying the company was now pumping about 100 million cubic metres a day to Ukrainian consumers.

The company has threatened to cut supplies further, but says this will not happen before expected talks in Moscow on Thursday.

Year	United States (%)	Japan (%)
1950	10	12
1960	11	13
1970	12	14
1980	13	15
1990	14	16
2000	15	17
2010	15.5	18
2020	16	19
2030	16.2	19.5
2040	16.4	20
2050	16.5	20

THE Daily Crossword by Roger Jurgovan

ACROSS

- 1 Blue coloring agent
- 6 Condition
- 11 Certain name deposits
- 13 King of Belgium
- 15 Back ends?
- 17 Cigar ends
- 18 Diagnostic test, actor
- 19 Depart
- 20 Aspirins
- 21 Borge and Hammet
- 23 Kind of party
- 24 Race sport
- 25 Examiners
- 27 Diminutive suffixes
- 29 Honey badger
- 30 Fume
- 32 Corny ex-motors
- 33 Celtic
- 34 Church group
- 35 Believe
- 37 Cautels
- 38 Besmarched
- 42 Captured soldier, for ship

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All

Government hopes to save JD 10-20m by economising

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government was underlining the need for prudence in the public sector while dealing with taxpayers' money by ordering a flat 10 per cent cut in all "working expenditures" of all ministries and departments, Finance Minister Sami Gammoh said Monday.

Mr. Gammoh, explaining a Prime Ministry order issued earlier this week, said the government would use the savings from the operational budgets of the ministries and departments to improve public services and productive sectors of the economy.

The minister said the government was hoping to save up to JD 20 million through the ordered reductions in spending in all areas of current expenditure — water, electricity, transport, communications, stationery etc.

However, he indicated that JD 20 million was not an absolute figure.

More importantly, he said, "we want to raise the awareness of everybody concerned while dealing with public funds of need to be careful and prudent."

"Everyone has to ensure that resources are spent in the right channel with optimum

benefits to serve the purpose for which they are allocated," he told the Jordan Times.

Mr. Gammoh said the move was also intended as a message to "all concerned," including ministers and senior decision-making officials at various departments that "there is a need for better management of economy" and that they should exercise control.

"Wastage has to be reduced and better utilisation of funds and cost-effectiveness have to be achieved in all government ministries and departments," he said.

"We know this is difficult, in view of the fact that the (1994) budget is already tight," Mr. Gammoh said. "But there is no alternative if we were to advance towards self-reliance and independence from external assistance."

The JD 1.487 billion fiscal budget for 1994 projects a shortfall of JD 158 million, expected to be addressed by external assistance.

The "operational budgets" covered under the government measure are estimated at nearly JD 200 million for 1994.

Dr. Fahed Fanek, an economist and newspaper columnist, agreed that it was "difficult to cut expenditures" but said the government move was "worth exploring."

Reducing expenditure has

been adopted by the government as a means to cut the budget deficit for several years now, "and there is a limit to which one could go in reducing expenses before reaching the bone," Dr. Fanek said.

However, the economist said he saw room for reduction in the travel expenditures and allowances for government officials.

"I think the minister is seeking a saving of JD 10 million to JD 20 million," given the nature of expenses as given in a government circular issued Sunday, Dr. Fanek said.

"It will be worthwhile even if we save JD 1 million or JD 2 million," he said.

The circular from the Prime Ministry defined the areas of reduction as water, electricity, fuel, telephone, telex, mail and stationery expenses.

It said a significant increase in expenditure was noticed in these areas and that it was necessary to economise in line with the economic restructuring programme under way in the Kingdom.

Mr. Gammoh said the measure to cut expenditure applied also to all public sector undertakings, including institutions such as the Social Security Corporation, the Jordan Investment Bureau and other agencies which operate directly under government guidance.

Algerian prime minister says debt rescheduling 'inevitable'

PARIS (R) — The rescheduling of Algeria's \$26 billion foreign debt is inevitable. Prime Minister Redha Malek said in an interview published in Algeria Monday.

"The aggravation of the debt servicing burden, which has become untenable along with the slump in petroleum prices since the last quarter of 1993, has made rescheduling inevitable," he told the dailies El Watan and El Khabar.

"In 1993, the foreign debt service ratio reached 83 per cent and projections for 1994 show it will probably be over 100 per cent of our export earnings," he added.

It is the first time the Algerian authorities have used the word rescheduling in the context of foreign debt. Until now they have preferred to speak of "reprofiling" in current talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In the interview carried by the official news agency APS monitored in Paris, Mr. Malek said Algeria had to "reach a one-year stand-by agreement to ensure macro-economic stability, i.e. in our economy's domestic and foreign financial

balances."

"The results of our talks with the IMF director in Algiers lead us to affirm there is grounds for agreement on the essential questions of the problem. We hope to reach an accord soon," he said.

France said Friday it will wait for Algeria to sign an agreement with the IMF before giving new aid to the North African country.

"We want an accord with the IMF so that Algeria can obtain a rescheduling of its debt and external financial resources, which are needed for Algeria's economic development, can be freed up," a foreign ministry spokeswoman told ministry's daily briefing.

"We are waiting for the agreement to be concluded for the external resources, including France's, to contribute to aiding the Algerian economy's restructuring," she added.

Last year, Paris gave about six billion francs (\$1 billion) to Algeria, which won independence from France in 1962 after a seven-year war. The money was mainly for essential food imports.

Algeria is in the midst of negotiating a loan worth several hundred million dollars from the IMF, which is expected to be followed by a Paris Club rescheduling of its foreign debt.

Algeria has been forced to the table with the IMF because its export earnings have plunged along with the price of oil, which provides more than 90 per cent of its hard currency.

The country is due to pay out about \$9 billion in debt service this year but its oil earnings are expected to slip below this level.

Under Paris Club rules, it cannot get a break on the debt service unless it first signs an IMF accord, which is expected to bring a loan of several hundred dollars but also to require painful economic reforms.

Algerian Economy Minister Mourad Benachouh is due in Washington this week to hammer out the details of an IMF deal, a source close to the talks said Thursday, although he is likely to need final approval from Algiers to seal an accord.

Martin Marietta, Grumman agree to a \$1.9 billion merger

MARYLAND BETHESDA, (AP) — Martin Marietta Corp. has agreed to buy Grumman Corp. in a \$1.9 billion merger of defence contractors, the companies announced Monday.

The boards of both companies unanimously approved a merger pact under which Martin Marietta will offer \$55 per share in cash for Grumman's outstanding shares.

That is more than a 37 per cent premium over Grumman's closing price on Friday. The merger puts the new company "on the leading edge of the industry consolidation that is so essential to preserving our nation's defence capabilities and the jobs that go with them," Norman Augustine, Martin Marietta chairman, said in a statement.

"This combination will create a company with over \$13 billion in sales that will have the critical mass, breadth of programmes and depth of technology to be solidly positioned in the aerospace-electronics industry," he said.

The merger is subject to federal antitrust review. In trading on the New York Stock Exchange, Grumman, surged \$14.125 a share to \$54 while Martin Marietta was up \$1.75 a share at \$46.50.

Martin Marietta was the 10th ranking defence contractor and Grumman the 12th, in 1992, the last year for which figures are available. Defence contracts were valued at \$2.3 billion for Martin Marietta and \$2.1 billion for Grumman in 1992, the last year for which figures are available, according to the Aerospace Industries Association.

Grumman ranked seventh in NASA contracts. Martin Marietta said it has commitments from several banks for \$2.4 billion in unsecured financing to support the tender offer.

Grumman Chairman Renzo Caporali said his Bethesda, N.Y.-based company "concluded over one year ago that we could not thrive in the current business climate without making a significant strategic move."

"We looked at a number of different approaches and combinations, and this is far superior to any of our other options," he said.

Martin Marietta, with nearly 93,000 employees, had sales last year of \$9.44 billion. It has facilities in 39 states and 17 foreign countries, operating in the electronics, space, information and energy sectors. Grumman has 18,000 em-

ployees and its sales last year exceeded defence electronics, commercial aircraft structures and computer information systems and software.

Asked if combining the two companies meant that Grumman would return to the business of designing military aircraft, Mr. Augustine said that was unlikely.

Mr. Caporali said the company would continue to be involved in aviation. "But that is not the same, obviously, as designing and competing for the next generation in military aircraft."

Martin Marietta, based in Bethesda, Maryland, has both expanded and contracted in the last year as the aerospace industry reshuffled in the wake of the end of the cold war.

Martin Marietta merged with G.E. Aerospace last April, then suffered the embarrassment of seeing three of that firm's satellites go awry. Later in the year, Martin bought the space business of General Dynamics, which makes the Atlas family of vehicles and said recently that the government would save \$250 million through the merger.

In September, Martin Marietta announced plans to lay off at least 3,500 employees

China yuan to float in April

BEIJING (R) — China's currency will start to float more freely from April 1 with the government aiming for convertibility on the current account by the year 2000, a senior official said.

The country, which for decades has kept a tight control over its hard currency, will relax foreign exchange controls over foreign trade this year, Zhu Xiaohua, vice governor of the People's Bank of China, China's central bank, has told the Xinhua news agency.

Mr. Zhu, who was made director of the State Administration of Exchange Control early this year, "said the moves will put the Chinese yuan considerably closer to being a freely convertible currency," the news agency said.

Beijing last year promised the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that as part of body convertibility could occur within five years.

But Mr. Zhu said "China will strive to make its currency convertible on current account within six years."

Xinhua said.

In a major reform, China abolished the state-set rate for

the yuan on Jan. 1, effectively devaluing the currency from 5.7 to one U.S. dollar to the 8.7 to one rate prevailing at semi-official swap centres.

The 8.7 rate has stayed steady since then, but Mr. Zhu said it would start to float from April 1 as the swap centres give way to a fledgling inter-bank foreign exchange market.

Mr. Zhu said the yuan would still not be allowed to float freely to avoid shocking the economy, which is still trying to change from responding to socialist-style commands to obeying the laws of the capitalist-style market.

"The flotation has to be somewhat controlled, considering China's reality, especially when our fiscal and monetary policies cannot fully regulate the economy," Mr. Zhu said.

He promised that there would be no price limits, however, and that intervention will be conducted mainly by buying or selling hard currency, the agency said.

"We will also see the frequency of such interventions gradually reduced," Mr. Zhu said.

He said the unified inter-bank foreign exchange market will have as members the 13 major domestic banks and 88 branches of foreign banks and Sino-foreign banks.

Meanwhile, a senior economist adviser to the government was quoted as saying that the flow of foreign capital into China will continue unabated this year. Despite the state-enforced contraction in real estate business.

While the property boom of recent years has been curbed by the government's credit clampdown, emerging sectors will provide new attractions for overseas funding, said Li Yue, secretary general of the influential China Association of Enterprises with Foreign Investment.

The association, which operates under the foreign trade ministry, is a key government adviser on economic policy.

"Foreign investors are expected to have a foothold in certain new sectors like banking and agriculture, while bringing about larger-scale projects," Mr. Li told the China Daily business weekly.

Financial Markets

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close 4/3/1994	Tokyo Close 4/3/1994
Sterling Pound	1.4895	1.4865
Deutsche Mark	1.7190	1.7238
Swiss Franc	1.4415	1.4451
French Franc	5.8445	5.8565**
Japanese Yen	105.60	105.50
European Currency Unit	1.1260	1.1231**

* USD Per STG

** European Options @ 8:00 a.m. GMT

Interbank Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.3125	3.5625	3.8750	4.3125
Sterling Pound	4.8750	4.9375	4.9375	5.0000
Deutsche Mark	5.8125	5.8250	5.4375	5.2500
Swiss Franc	4.0000	3.8750	3.8125	3.6875
French Franc	6.1250	6.0625	5.8750	5.7500
Japanese Yen	2.1250	2.0000	2.0625	2.1250
European Currency Unit	6.3700	6.2500	6.1200	5.9300

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Precious Metals

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	377.15	7.40	Silver	5.22	0.120

* 21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7010	0.7030
Sterling Pound	1.0409	1.0461
Deutsche Mark	0.4061	0.4081
Swiss Franc	0.4885	0.4869
French Franc	0.1196	0.1202
Japanese Yen	0.6635	0.6668
Dutch Guilder	0.3617	0.3635
Swedish Krona	0.0414	0.0416
Italian Lira	0.0414	0.0416
Belgian Franc	0.0414	0.0416

* Per 100

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8580	1.8540
Lebanese Lira	0.040525	0.041785
Saudi Riyal	0.1863	0.1872
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3300	2.3500
Qatari Riyal	0.1900	0.1915
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.7950	1.8150
UAE Dirham	0.1900	0.1915
Greek Drachma	0.2750	0.3135
Cypriot Pound	1.3275	1.3715

* Per 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Monday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3588/98	Canadian dollar
	1.7210/20	Deutschmarks
	1.93/94	Dutch guilders
	1.4430/40	Swiss francs
	35.43/47	Belgian francs
	5.8455/05	French francs
	1690.62/1	Italian lire
	105.53/63	Japanese yen
	8.0220/20	Swedish crowns
	7.4525/75	Norwegian crowns
	6.7200/50	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.4880/90	
One ounce of gold	\$377.0537/45	

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S. Africa's black, white right debate next political moves

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Black and white rightwingers met Monday to decide the next moves of their fragile alliance in the constitutional struggle over South Africa's first all-race elections in April.

One of the key members of the conservative Freedom Alliance, Mongosuthu Buthelezi's Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party, has provisionally signed up for the national and regional polls.

The other black Alliance member, the nominally-independent homeland of Bophuthatswana, put off for a week a decision on whether to register as other rightwingers met to decide the shape of international mediation.

African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela, who has vowed the election date cannot be changed, has urged that Alliance members be allowed more time to register, despite the expiry of the deadline to do so.

He reiterated during a weekend campaign swing through the northern Trans-

vaal that he would be willing to go down on his knees to bring peace to a country where more than 14,000 people have died in political violence in the past four years.

Bophuthatswana spokesman Alwyn Viljoen said its cabinet decided Monday it opposed participating in the elections but that the final decision should be left to the homeland's parliament.

"A full sitting of the Bophuthatswana parliament has been called for... March 15 to decide whether or not to register," he said.

The cabinet meeting took place against a backdrop of strikes and protests in Bophuthatswana, including a go-slow by civil servants demanding protection for their pensions when apartheid-created homelands are incorporated into South Africa proper after the April 26-28 elections.

Bophuthatswana President Lucas Mangope has said any move to provisionally register his Christian Democratic Party

for the poll would have to be linked to a postponement of the elections which will end more than three centuries of white domination.

The Freedom Alliance met without Bophuthatswana in Pretoria Monday to decide on what foreign mediators they wanted to resolve the constitutional impasse keeping them out of the poll.

Inkatha wants a large measure of regional autonomy, while the two main white groups in the alliance, the Afrikaner People's Front (APF) and the pro-apartheid Conservative Party are demanding a white homeland in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Inkatha says it will only consider taking part in the elections if its autonomy demands are suitably addressed and agreed upon following international mediation.

ANC spokesman Carl Niehaus said Monday ANC and Inkatha officials would meet Tuesday in Durban to discuss the mediation issue. Suggestions on who should

mediate range from former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

Difficulties in extending the registration while the question of international mediation were discussed were practical rather than political, officials at the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) said Monday.

IEC spokesman Pieter Cronje said one of the major problems was approving the proofs and printing 80 million ballot papers — 35 million for the National Assembly and 45 million for provincial legislatures.

He said that if political parties wanted the deadline extended to bring other groups into the poll they could ask the IEC, which would in turn take the issue to the multi-party Transitional Executive Council (TEC) helping to rule in the election run up.

"If the TEC approved... then the state president can extend the deadline by proclamation," he said.



Singer Frank Sinatra (right) is wheeled to a waiting ambulance after he collapsed near the end of his sold-out concert in Richmond, Virginia (AFP photo)

Sinatra collapses during performance

RICHMOND, Va (R) — Less than three hours after collapsing during a performance here Sunday night, entertainer Frank Sinatra was released from a local hospital.

Broadcast reports said Sinatra, who was released from Medical College Virginia Hospital at 12:17 a.m. est (0517 GMT), was headed back to his home in Palm Springs, California.

A hospital spokeswoman said no information about his condition would be released in respect for the entertainer's privacy and further medical information would come from Sinatra's personal physician in California.

Sinatra collapsed at 9:45 est (0245 Monday GMT) during an encore following a performance at the Richmond Mosque Theatre and was taken offstage in a wheelchair before a weeping, cheering audience, officials and news reports said.

Shortly after arriving at the hospital, he was "talking and alert," his publicist, Susan Reynolds said through a hospital aide. Mr. Reynolds said the singer "became overheated and passed out for a few moments."

Director of facilities at the theatre, Robert Papke, said Sinatra had nearly completed his second sold-out performance at the theatre when he collapsed.

He was alert as he left for the hospital, Papke said. Members of the audience, interviewed on local television, said that a spotlight remained on Sinatra as he was lifted off the stage and placed in a wheelchair.

Members of the audience, some weeping, gave him an ovation as he was wheeled offstage.

Sinatra, once the singing idol of swooning fans, was singing his theme song My Way, when

he collapsed. "He was right in the middle of My Way, Frank looked to his son and said could you give me a chair," a broadcast on Cable News Network reported.

"Frank pitched over and fell. His head hit the monitor. It was really horrifying," the spectator said.

Sinatra last week made an emotional speech during the Grammy ceremonies in New York, where he was presented with the U.S. music industry awards' Living Legend Award.

Sinatra currently has a hit album titled Duets, which showcases him with younger singers who once rejected his brand of pop music.

The record has been heralded as an intergenerational and technological triumph and sold two million albums in its first five months in record stores.

Surviving Beatles to join Lennon in song

NEW YORK (R) — The Beatles may be getting together again — on a new recording, a newspaper reported at the weekend. The voice of John Lennon, along with the three surviving Beatles, will be heard in the new recording, their first in 25 years. New York Newsday said Saturday. The daily, quoting a report in Beatlefan magazine, said the three surviving Beatles are recording new music now, bringing the long-held dream of a reunited group one step closer. The paper said the group was working with a demonstration tape provided by Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, of Lennon singing a song recorded in 1980 — Free As A Bird. John Lennon was murdered outside his New York apartment in December 1980. Originally, the song had been made public on the "lost Lennon tapes," a syndicated radio series. The three surviving Beatles — Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr — have been adding their own instrumental and vocal tracks, Newsday said. It said the demonstration tape Ono provided also includes three other songs by Lennon: Real Love also known as Boys And Girls, Grow Old With Me, a version of which was issued in 1984 on Lennon's posthumous Milk And Honey album and a piano number whose title has yet to be disclosed. Newsday, quoting the special edition of Beatlefan, said considerable electronic enhancement of the demo recordings of Lennon's voice were needed to make them usable.

Police seek 'little tykes' who shot man

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Philadelphia police were hunting for a quartet of "little tykes" after four gun-toting robbers nine to 12 years old mugged and shot a man. Police said 29-year-old Mike Molinar told authorities he was accosted by the children as he left his house in the South Philadelphia neighborhood. The four demanded his money. When he hesitated, the smallest boy pulled out a pistol and shot him, Police said. A police spokesman said authorities were on the lookout for "four little tykes" who fled empty-handed.

Prisoner on the run asks policeman the way

LONDON (R) — A highly dangerous prisoner on the run in Britain asked a policeman for directions when his taxi driver lost his way, the Daily Telegraph said Monday. Police are still searching for the convict. He escaped during a hospital visit in Preston, northwest England, and took the taxi across the country — pointed in the right direction by the helpful officer — before running off without paying. In a previous escape, the 28-year-old armed robber hid in a house being used by police coordinating the search for him.

Emir warns Kuwaitis against 'flabbiness'

KUWAIT (R) — The Emir of Kuwait urged the emirate's citizens to curb their affluent lifestyles lest they fall prey to "arrogance and flabbiness." The ruler of the affluent Gulf state of 1.5 million people, in an annual televised address marking the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, said the emirate was at a critical stage. "The persistence of the style of luxury and overspending is not a financial burden only," he added. "Rather it is in the first place the wrecking of the balanced personality and implanting of the disease of arrogance and flabbiness."

The little engines that could...

BRUSSELS (R) — Almost 200 miniature trains pulled a full-size 23-tonne railway car along several metres of track Sunday in a bid to make the Guinness Book of Records. The 199 model locomotives, 21 cm (8 in) long and weighing just 785 gm (24 oz) were lined up in rows on 50 miniature rail tracks. When the starting whistle blew, three models broke free, but an official said it took 38.8 seconds for the remaining 196 tiny engines to pull the wagon 5.7 metres (6.2 yards).

Kazakhstan president calls for deeper reform

ALMA ATA, Kazakhstan (R) — Voters trudged through snow Monday to cast ballots in Kazakhstan's first contested parliamentary elections, ushering in a more democratic era for the former Soviet republic. President Nursultan Nazarbayev voted as dancing girls twirled beside him, then called for deeper economic reforms. "First of all (the new parliament) needs to pass laws which deepen the economic reforms in the banking system, taxation and the situation of foreign investment," he told journalists.

Kazakhstan, the second-biggest ex-Soviet republic, has attracted foreign investment deals worth tens of billions of dollars since independence in 1991. Mainly in its promising oil and gas sector.

Western donors have pledged official cash in excess of \$1 billion this year to help moves toward a market economy and the dismantling of nuclear weapons on Kazakhstan's soil.

Monday's elections will replace a disbanded, part-time parliament composed of 360 members — some of them farmers, labourers and Soviet "worker heroes" — with a full-time legislature of 177 seats.

Presidential appointees will occupy 42 of the seats. The rest will be filled by voters from 692 candidates running for several political movements or as independents in 135 districts.

Foreign diplomats said the election is likely to produce a legislature amenable to Mr. Nazarbayev's wishes. Some 218 candidates, many from opposition organisations, were barred from running and more than half of the candidates hold some state or government job.

"In some contexts there were very superficial and administrative reasons for some candidates not being registered," said Linda Edgeworth, an official with the United States' International Foundation for Electoral Systems.

Voters in Alma Ata, the capital, found a welcome surprise near their polling booths — unusually well-stocked shops selling food at discounts. "It's special for the election," said a shop assistant. "Lemons, cucumbers, grapefruit, sardines, everything at a discount."

But some voters remained disgruntled. The election campaign has been marred by opposition allegations of government falsification and irregularities.

Several opposition groups, including the pro-Islamic nationalist Alash Movement, have been denied the right to register as a political party. Opposition parties are legal but have had less impact than elsewhere in the region.

Kazakhstan, with Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, became a nuclear power when the Soviet Union collapsed two years ago. It then had 104 SS-18 missiles, a nuclear-bomber base and 1,400 warheads on its territory.

U.S. must not set talks preconditions — N. Korea

TOKYO (R) — North Korea gave the United States a fresh warning Monday that the future of their faltering dialogue would be at risk unless Washington abandoned its preconditions for a resumption of talks.

"If the United States... create artificial difficulties in the way of the talks by bringing forward such a precondition as the exchange of special envoys between the North and South of Korea in the future, it will reveal its intention not to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula," the official Rodong Sinmun Daily said.

Months of growing tension over North Korea's nuclear ambitions eased somewhat in late February when Pyongyang agreed to allow resumption of limited U.N. inspections of its supposedly civilian nuclear sites to verify its assertion that no plutonium had been diverted for military use.

U.N. experts began carrying out their first checks there in over a year last Thursday, after South Korea conditionally suspended joint military exercises with the United States and Washington announced a third round of high-level talks with the isolated Stalinist state aimed at improving bilateral ties.

The current dispute turns on

a related issue. The resumption of contacts between the two Koreas aimed at arranging an exchange of special envoys.

The envoys' task would be to arrange an historic summit meeting between North Korean President Kim Il-Sung and his southern counterpart, Kim Young-Sam.

While the United States and Seoul say suspension of the Team Spirit joint war games was conditional on the envoy exchange, Pyongyang insists it committed itself only to begin talks on such an exchange.

A first round took place Thursday but made no progress.

The following day, Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-Ju, head of North Korea's delegation to the U.S. talks, warned Washington that insistence on this point could wreck the inspections agreement.

Monday's Rodong Sinmun commentary said the American position "makes us doubt whether it has the willingness to fully implement the conclusions or not."

The ruling party daily added: "The stand of the United States that it will take an action only when the other side acts first, shows that it seeks a solution to the issue from the position of strength."

U.K. may widen search in 'horror house' case

GLOUCESTER, England (R) — Police said Monday they were considering widening their search for bodies after discovering a sixth corpse at an ordinary-looking home that newspapers have dubbed the "house of horror."

The latest remains were found Sunday in the cellar of the three-storey semi-detached house in Gloucester, western England.

"We have now discovered six bodies," Chief Inspector Colin Handy of the Gloucestershire Police told British Broadcasting Corporation Radio.

Frederick West, whose home is at 25 Cromwell Street, was charged last week with murdering his teenage daughter Heather, who vanished seven years ago aged 16. Hers is believed to be one of three bodies found in the house's tiny back garden.

"We've finished in the garden almost completely," Mr. Handy added, saying that searches were digging in the basement of the house and also checking the first floor.

"When we are satisfied that there are no more bodies in the house... then we will consider moving on."

Mr. West, a 52-year-old builder with some 10 children from two marriages, was scheduled to appear in court later Monday where he was expected to be charged with more murders.

Mr. West has also been accused of killing teenager Shirley Robinson, a lodger at his house who was pregnant when she died, and an unknown woman believed to have been in her early 20s.

China draws security tight as crucial week begins

BEIJING (R) — China began the most important week of its diplomatic and political calendar Monday with a crackdown on dissent, pulling security tight before the annual session of parliament and the arrival of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

The country's most famous dissident, Wei Jingsheng, remained out of Beijing Monday after he abruptly disappeared over the weekend following a 30-hour spell in police detention that sparked criticism in Washington over human rights.

Mr. Wei's secretary, Tong Yi, told reporters the veteran activist, officially charged with violating the terms of his September, 1993, parole, had left Beijing voluntarily.

Mr. Wei, who served close to 15 years in jail on charges of attempting to subvert the government by advocating democracy, last week met the top U.S. official in charge of human rights and urged Washington to keep up its pressure on Beijing.

Other members of China's small dissident community have been pulled in for questioning in recent days and officials have confirmed at least three have been detained on

various charges.

Dissident sources said some of the cases might be connected to an underground statement now circulating in Beijing demanding protection for labour interests and an end to the epidemic of official corruption now sweeping China.

The five-point statement, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters, requests parliament to consider constitutional revisions allowing freedom of speech, assembly and the right to strike in order to prevent government-sanctioned exploitation.

It also demands a better deal for the country's 800 million peasants, who suffer heavily under a raft of taxes and fees often unilaterally imposed by local officials, and the right to organise labour unions free of government control.

While there is no clear evidence linking the unsigned statement to the detentions, the points underlined in the document are among those included in a "peace charter" signed by some of those detained in the current crackdown.

Beijing's sweep against dissent came just days before the arrival of Mr. Christopher, who is expected to deliver a

final warning to China's Communist leaders that they must demonstrate "progress" on human rights or risk losing preferential access to U.S. markets for billions of dollars worth of exports.

President Bill Clinton has tied renewal of China's most favoured nation (MFN) trade status firmly to the human-rights issue, and must make a decision by June on whether or not Beijing has met his conditions for an extension.

China has rejected U.S. criticism as interference in its internal affairs and opposes linking the issues of trade and human rights.

Mr. Christopher, who joined Mr. Clinton in voicing concern over Mr. Wei's detention last Friday, is due to begin his visit to China on March 11.

The jump in diplomatic tension comes as delegates converge on Beijing for the annual meeting of China's rubber-stamp parliament, the National People's Congress, which begins a two-week session on March 10.

While parliament rarely strays far from the game plan set by the Communist Party leadership, it has in the past

occasionally seen brief bursts of relatively open political debate.

Clearly Beijing fears a possibility exists this year for such a debate as China gallops toward another year of explosive economic growth and rising inflation.

Along with managing the economy, the government is also pushing through dramatic reforms that are widening income gaps, shaking established power centres and ripping apart the "iron rice bowl" of Socialist-style economic security.

A Beijing-controlled news agency said last week that Zhou Guoqing, one of the three dissidents officially announced to be in detention, had planned to disrupt the parliament meeting by distributing T-shirts printed with provocative slogans.

Mr. Zhou, who was also charged with illegal use of a fax machine and holding unapproved briefings for foreign reporters, aimed to "agitate feelings of dissatisfaction among the masses and disrupt social order" through his T-shirt plan, the Hong Kong-based China News Service said.

مكتبة ابن النجار

Spurs beat Magic, spoil Shaq's birthday party

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (R) — Shaquille O'Neal came home for his 22nd birthday Sunday but David Robinson spoiled the party as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Orlando Magic 111-103.

Robinson had 36 points, 13 rebounds and six blocked shots to lead the Spurs, who rallied from a 16-point third quarter deficit.

O'Neal, who grew up in San Antonio and played high school basketball here, had 32 points and 11 rebounds in the marquee matchup of all-star centres.

The Magic held an 84-68 lead with 1:53 left in the third quarter and were up by 12 at the start of the fourth. But the Spurs went on a 15-3 run that pulled San Antonio even at 89-89 with 7:01 left.

A layup by sleepy Floyd, who was celebrating his 34th birthday, put the Spurs ahead to stay at 99-98 with 2:45 remaining.

Dale Ellis contributed 22 points for the Spurs, while Dennis Scott chipped in 21 for Orlando.

At Cleveland, John Williams scored 23 points and Bobby Phillips added 19 as the streaking Cavaliers made it 10 wins in a row with a 99-95 victory over the Chicago Bulls.

Cleveland moved within 2½ games second-place Chicago in the Central Division as the Bulls suffered their fifth straight loss — their longest slide since April, 1989.

Pete Myers scored 17 points and Luc Longley had 16 for the struggling NBA champions.

Tyrone Hill chipped in 13 points and 13 rebounds for the Cavs, who have a league-best 11-1 record since the All-Star break.

At New Jersey, Armon Gilliam had 20 points and Derrick Coleman recorded his first triple-double of the season to lead the Nets to a 126-99 rout of the Philadelphia 76ers.

Coleman had 13 points, 12 rebounds, and 10 assists for his second career triple-double.

Benoit Benjamin and Kevin

Edwards combined for 15 points in a 19-3 third-quarter run that blew the game open for the Nets, who had eight players in double figures.

Dana Barros had 25 points and Jeff Malone netted 18 for Philadelphia, which suffered its 13th straight loss — its longest slide since the 1972-73 season when the club managed just nine wins.

In Phoenix, Karl Malone scored 22 of his 30 points in the second half to power the Utah Jazz to their ninth-straight win, a 103-92 triumph over the Suns.

John Stockton had a season-high 20 assists and 18 points as Utah won in Phoenix in the regular season for the first time in eight years.

Cedric Ceballos scored 22 for the Suns, whose 10-game home winning streak was snapped. Charles Barkley scored 13 of his 19 points in the first half to help the Suns to a 51-50 halftime lead.

In Sacramento, Gary Payton had 24 points and Vincent Askew scored 19 to pace the Seattle SuperSonics to a 102-85 victory over the Kings and a sweep of their home-and-home series.

Seattle has won five straight and improved its league-best record to 42-14.

The Sonics held an 11-point lead after one quarter and extended their advantage to 19 after opening the second with an 11-3 spurt. Seattle led 60-40 at the half and never let the Kings closer than 15 the rest of the way.

In Denver, Mahmoud Abdul Rauf had 23 points and Laphonso Ellis added 21 to pace the Nuggets to a 117-97 rout of the Minnesota Timberwolves.

The Nuggets have won seven of their last nine games and moved above the .500 at 29-28 for the first time since December 10 (9-8).

Chris Smith had 25 points and Doug West scored 15 for the Timberwolves, who have lost 16 of their last 18 games.

Kerrigan thanks hometown for support, assails media

STONEHAM, Mass. (R) — Thousands of Nancy Kerrigan fans turned out for a homecoming parade Sunday for the Olympic silver medalist, who wept in gratitude for their support, saying her eight-week rise to celebrity had been "really, really hard."

At least 50,000 fans lined the main street for the parade.

"This is very emotional. All that happened to me in the last couple of months has been really, really hard," said Kerrigan, breaking down twice in tears during brief remarks after the event.

A bit later she told a news conference about fame: "It's all new and exciting — sometimes overwhelming and a bit

scary. I'm just this girl from Stoneham who ice skates... it's very good to have this support."

She also attacked the media for being mercurial.

"The press and the media built me up," she told reporters. "They want to bring me down. I don't understand it."

Before and during the Olympics, Kerrigan was heralded as America's newest sweetheart. But subsequent events, such as when she complained about the delay in the medals ceremony, and said gold medalist Oksana Baiul should not bother to repair her tear-stained make-up, she was quickly criticised by the media.

Horse endurance race open to all, says Princess Alia

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Horsebreeders will have a chance to test their favourite horses in a special endurance race organised by the Jordanian Arabian Horse Society (JAHS) April 15.

The 60-kilometre race will take participants from Al Yadoudeh south of Amman, passing through the early Islamic site of Qasr Al Mushatta and ending at Qasr Al Harraneh.

At a press conference Sunday at the Royal Stables at Hummar, Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein extended the invitation to all horsebreeders to participate, and stressed that the race was open and not reserved for thoroughbred Arabian horses.

Her Highness, the President of JAHS and the Arab Organisation for Arabian Horses pointed out that first prize would be given to the

owner of the horse that would demonstrate high endurance and prove to be fit after an examination of fitness and stamina following the race.

The Princess also said that there would be three stops along the course to check any injury or exhaustion and make sure that the race is completed safely.

Her Highness said that such endurance races were now being organised alongside horse shows and that the purebred Arabian horses were worthy winners of such contests proving their well-known fitness and endurance.

Princess Alia also added that prior to the endurance race sponsored by Coca Cola, 20 horses from the Royal Stables will take part in the Qatar Horse Show March 22.

Horse races will also be held in Amman in May and August, before holding the annual Arabian horse show in September.

Equestrian tourney resumes Thursday

Meanwhile, the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation has announced that it will hold the final leg of the Ramadan Horse Jumping Championships on Thursday at the indoor competition arena of the Arabian Horse Club.

A press release by the federation said participants in the competition include members of the national equestrian team and rookie riders. Chairman of the board of directors of the federation Rabie Hashem said competitions will be organised by the federation every Thursday, and the results will be taken on monthly basis in a bid to promote the sport.

Jordan's international Hani Al Bisharat played a key role in preparing promising riders to participate in the first category competitions, including Raad Nasser, Saad Kilani, Mona Siktian, Fares Taher, Omar Bibi, Yazid Jaber and Shereen Rasekh.



Jackson takes world record

SINDELINGEN, Germany (R) — Briton Colin Jackson, disappointed three weeks ago, trimmed 0.06 seconds off the world indoor record in the 60 metres hurdles Sunday.

Jackson's time of 7.30 seconds means the Welshman

is now the sole holder of the world record he had shared on 7.36 with American Greg Foster.

Last month, at a meeting in Glasgow, Jackson had been awarded the world record with a time given as 7.35 seconds.

But embarrassed officials said later that the photo-finish machine had in fact shared that Jackson's time was 7.36, equalling the previous record set by Foster in Los Angeles in 1987.

Number of substitutes raised for World Cup

ZURICH, Switzerland (AP) — Three substitutes — one more than in the past — will be allowed at soccer games starting with this summer's World Cup under a rule change.

The new rule lets coaches bring on two field subs and a designated replacement goalkeeper during a match. Until now, the keeper was included in the contingent of two substitutes.

The move, designed to give coaches more flexibility in planning tactics, was approved by soccer's rulemaking International Football Association board. The eight-man body is comprised of four officials from FIFA and one representative from each of the four British Soccer Associations.

"This is an offer to the coach," FIFA General Secretary Joseph Blatter told a news conference. He said the rule would be introduced at the World Cup hosted by the United States starting June 17.

Other announcements after the board's two-day meeting at FIFA headquarters in Zurich included:

FIFA will instruct referees at this year's World Cup to move harshly against "reckless" fouls, including tackles from behind.

Graham Kelly, chief executive of England's Football Association, said FIFA will stress that "referees identify dangerous play... and impose the appropriate sanction."

Blatter reiterated that he wants a mandatory expulsion for tackles from behind to be written into the game's laws.

"Portable goals now must be securely anchored to avoid accidents."

The board will study whether to streamline the offside rule. Conclusions are to be unveiled next year. Kelly said while the offside rule "is one of the shortest in the book, it causes more controversy, more complexity than most."

Blatter said the four British associations gave no immediate reply to a request for a volunteer league to experiment with replacing throw-ins with kick-ins.

He said first divisions are unlikely to be chosen for such a trial because clubs would have to switch back to the regular playing system for international matches.

On another point, Blatter cut off a reporter trying to ask about his tiff with FIFA President Joao Havelange of Brazil.

Havelange, 77, has run FIFA since 1974 and is expected to bid for a fifth term of office at the annual congress in June shortly before the World Cup starts.

Blatter, a Swiss who runs FIFA's daily operations, has criticised Havelange publicly but has not declared a candidacy for the top job.

Blatter and U.S. organisers clashed with Havelange after he banned Pele from the World Cup draw in Las Vegas last December because soccer's greatest player is in a lawsuit with Havelange's son-in-law.

Havelange chaired the board's meeting but was absent for the press conference.

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Sampras rallies for champions Cup title

INDIAN WELLS, California (R) — World number one Pete Sampras relied on tenacity to overcome a less than stellar performance as the twice rallied from a set down to win the \$1.72 million Champions Cup tennis title late Sunday.

The top-seeded Sampras turned back 10th seed Peter Korda of the Czech Republic 4-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 in three hours and nine minutes to earn \$245,000 and his third title of year.

Sampras found himself in a position he is not accustomed to as he had to fight from behind for most of the match. His big serve, which accounted for 23 aces, kept him in the uphill battle when the going got tough.

"I played well all week, but I didn't play great today. Still, I managed to get through it," said Sampras, the reigning Wimbledon, U.S. Open and Australian Open champion.

"I'm happy because I

showed that I could turn a bad day into a good day," said Sampras, who had never been past the third round here before.

Korda's early success in the match came from engaging Sampras in long baseline rallies and successfully avoiding short serve and volley points, which are the American's strength.

The 14th-ranked Korda, who earned \$129,000 as runner-up of the 56-player hardcourt tournament, felt the match hinged on a pair of break points in the first game of the fourth set.

The Czech left-hander had won the third set on a lone service break to go up two sets to one. His big chance to get the upper hand in the fourth set came early with two break points against Sampras' serve in the first game.

When the top-ranked American saved both break points with successful net approaches, fatigue began to take its toll on

the dejected Korda.

"I knew if I was going to beat him I had to do it in three or four sets," said Korda, who had upset Sampras in a five-setter at the Grand Slam Cup last year.

"I had longer matches than he did this week and I got tired. It was very important that I make those two break points at the beginning of the fourth set."

After saving the crucial break points, Sampras broke Korda in the eighth game to take the fourth set and rolled through the deciding fifth set.

Sampras broke the tiring Czech in the first game and captured his serve again for insurance and a 4-1 lead. The top seed then confidently served out the match.

"I knew for him to beat me he would have to play three really good sets, even though I was making more errors than normal," Sampras said.

Graf captures Florida Slims, title

DELRAY BEACH, Florida (R) — The Steffi Graf juggernaut rumbled onward Sunday as the world number one collected the Virginia Slims of Florida title with her 22nd consecutive straight sets victory of the year.

Top-seed and defending champion Graf stopped second seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-3, 7-5 to pick up her fourth title of the year and 83rd career singles crown.

On Sunday, Graf faced the first set points by an opponent this year. But the outcome was the same as the German rose to the occasion to keep her remarkable unblemished record going.

Sanchez, looking to avenge a 6-0, 6-2 humiliation in this year's Australian Open final, was on the verge of clinching the second set when she led 5-4, 15-40 on Graf's serve.

"I realised she had two set

points and I just wanted to concentrate on my serve, which I did very well," Graf said.

"I wanted to be aggressive at that moment. The first thing I told myself is to play a good first serve."

Graf followed her instructions well, serving herself out of trouble and running off the final three games of the one hour and 25 minute match.

Graf, who has not lost a match since last November and has not dropped a set in 1994, collected \$80,000 for her fifth Virginia Slims of Florida title.

"She has confidence now," said the second-ranked Sanchez, who has just five wins against Graf in 28 career meetings.

"She's playing her best and she knows that. But I think you probably can break her, but you have to play your best," added the Spaniard, who

earned \$32,000.

Graf rolled out to a 5-2 first-set lead before Sanchez played herself into the match and began to give the German a run for her money.

The two exchanged service breaks to open the second set and settled in for a struggle that brought Sanchez to her double set point in the 10th game.

"I was a little bit unlucky. I knew if I wanted to beat her I'd have to go for my shots. At the end, I still lost the match," said Sanchez, who committed 32 unforced errors to 19 for the top seed.

Undaunted, the always confident Spaniard was already looking forward to a rematch with Graf on the next stop on the tour — the Lipton championships, where Sanchez beat Graf in the final last year.

"Next week is my week," Sanchez said.

American 'rabbit' pulls upset

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Paul Pilkington, paid to be the pacesetter in the Los Angeles Marathon, pulled a major surprise by winning the race Sunday.

No one was more shocked than Luca Barzaghi of Italy, who finished second.

Barzaghi was so confident that he mentally chose the colour he wanted for the luxury car that went to the winner. He said he did not pass Pilkington because he was told the pacesetter would do just that, set the pace, nothing more.

"The reason why I didn't go was because it was my strategy to stay with the elites."

"I was told the 'rabbit' would drop out," he said.

Third-place finisher Andrzej Krzyscin of Poland also said was told the pacesetter would drop out, "100 per cent for sure."

Pilkington said he did not understand why anyone would assume that he would quit since, as an American, he was

also competing for the U.S. championship. This was the first time the Los Angeles Marathon was designated as the national championship race.

"He made a tactical mistake," he said of Barzaghi. "It is still a race."

"I didn't run any faster than was pre-planned. It wasn't a sporadic pace. It wasn't fast. I don't understand why he didn't go."

Pilkington was only the second American to win since Ric Sayre in the inaugural 1986 L.A. Marathon.

Pilkington, a high school English and history teacher, was timed in 2 hours, 12 minutes, 13 seconds, and just beat a cloudburst which hit after he crossed the finish line.

Barzaghi was timed at 2:12:52 and Krzyscin of Poland was third in 2:13:21.

Fractions of a second behind were Marix Goegebeur of Belgium and Mexico's Gumerindo Olmedo.

Pilkington led the pack throughout, refusing to drop out at the halfway mark.

He received \$15,000 for winning the marathon and \$12,000 for winning the national title, in addition to the undisclosed amount he was paid to set the pace. He also wound up with the Mercedes-Benz sport sedan.

Pilkington, 35, has been a marathon runner for a dozen years and has acted as a "rabbit" in the New York City, Cleveland, and Japanese marathons. His agent, Bob Wood, would not disclose how much Pilkington would be paid for setting the pace, only saying it depended on how fast he ran per mile (1.6 kilometres). Pilkington refused to say how much he made.

"I told him, 'Paul, if nobody's there and if you feel like a human being, go for it.' His pacing job is to make sure the race is fast. None of the other competitors felt it was important to stay with him," Wood

said.

"They didn't come with me," Pilkington said of the pack. "Tactically they made a mistake by not keeping up. I didn't decide to stay in until the 15th or 16th mile (24-26 kilometres)."

Favoured American Ed Eyestone, who hoped to defend his title, is a friend and training partner of Pilkington. Eyestone pulled a groin muscle on Friday during a practice run and did not finish in the top 10.

Olga Appel, a Mexican who became a U.S. citizen last month led the women clocking a personal best of 2:28:12.

A 40-year-old Italian runner, Emma Scaunich, was second at 2:37:05, rounding out the top five were American Silvia Mosqueda at 2:40:12 and Russians Olga Youdenkova (2:40:24) and Olga Mitchourina (2:46:01).

While the winners each received \$15,000 and the Mercedes, second place was worth \$10,000.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMAR HIRSCH
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A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

Both vulnerable. South dealer.

NORTH

4 3

9 4

A Q J 4 2

WEST EAST

Q J 10 7 2

A K Q 10 7 5 2

8 7 10 9 6 5

Q 8 7 6 K 5 4 2

SOUTH

A K 9 8 6 5

J K 8 3

K 3

9

The bidding:

South West North East

1 Pass 2 Pass

2 Pass 3 Pass

3 Pass 4 Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of

Follow the bidding and play of

this deal. At the end, decide whether

any of the players could have

done better.

With a minimum opening and a

good six-card spade suit, South had

only one story to tell. Once North

had bid both minors and South

could not bid no trump, North courageously raised to game with a low doubleton and the best contract was reached.

West led the king of hearts and, with the possibility of a heart ruff starting everyone in the face, shifted to the queen of spades. Declarer won and surrendered a heart, but the defenders removed dummy's last trump. Now declarer went after diamonds, but West ruffed the third diamond and cashed a third heart for down one. Did everything go according to the script?

Given a 3-2 trump split — essential if the contract were to succeed — declarer has 10 tricks going in five spades, four diamonds and a club. As long as declarer can protect those, the contract is a sure thing. That doesn't require any outlandish maneuvering, just simple technique.

When West shifts to a trump at trick two, declarer should simply duck. The defenders are left without resource. The best they can do is take another heart trick, holding declarer to the contract. Should they try anything else, declarer will be able to draw trumps and then run diamonds, thereby scoring an overtrick.

Cinema	Tel.: 634144	Cinema	Tel.: 699238	Cinema	Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Tel.: 675571	Nabil & Hisham's	Tel.: 625155
PHILADELPHIA		PLAZA		CONCORD		AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE	
Far And Away Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 8:30, 10:30		Amr Diyab, Yusra & Omar Sherif in Laughter, Playing, Seriousness and Love Arabic Shows: 12:30, 3, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		CONCORD '1' The Fugitive Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' Filofax Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Opening Soon A political comedy Forbidden X Forbidden	presents a play entitled: Al Ilm Nuron A popular political comedy Actors: Abber Issa, Daoud Jalajel, Hassan Al Shaer, Fuad Shomali in addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold all day Coming soon: The next play	Nabil and Hisham Theatre presents Ahlan Arab Summit Conference (play) daily at 9:15 p.m. Theatre is closed Sundays, Monday and Tuesdays	

Lebanon revives death penalty in security campaign

BEIRUT (AP) — Authorities have launched a campaign to improve security and are seeking revival of the death penalty, spurred by the recent church bombing that killed nine people.

The blast jolted confidence in Lebanon's recovery from the 1975-1990 civil war. It was the latest blow to the state's attempts to rid Lebanon of the terrorist image it acquired as a haven for kidnappers, suicide bombers, sky pirates and assassins.

An extraordinary cabinet meeting Monday approved a proposal by Justice Minister Bahij Tabbara to revive the capital punishment law, rarely enforced in the last two decades.

Information Minister Michel Samaha said the cabinet would present to parliament a bill to extend the death penalty to political murders.

Under the current law only those convicted of premeditated murders are liable to the death penalty.

The cabinet also authorised the Justice Ministry to hire more judges to enhance the performance of the state's judiciary, which is facing a backlog of about 16,000 cases.

No one was arrested in the Feb. 27 bombing of the Notre Dame de la Delivrance Maronite Catholic Church in Souk Mikhael, a suburb of the port of Jounieh north of Beirut.

Investigators continued to search for clues in the attack, which also injured 60 Sunday mass worshippers.

Government opponents have criticised the national security agencies over the failure to crack the case.

Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said Monday he understood the public's impatience over the course of the investigation, but lashed out at those criticising the security services.

"What we need to do is to strengthen security, not weaken it," he said in an interview with the independent Al Nahar newspaper.

More police and army roadblocks have popped up in Beirut and suburbs in recent days. Gun-slinging troops checked identity papers of motorists as well as vehicle registrations and went on foot patrols in the capital's narrow, crowded streets.

The military dragnet was coupled by the public's own security precautions.

Churches and mosques have hired private armed guards. Attendance at worship places of all faiths is down, men are subjected to body searches before entering theatres and entertainment centres. Women's purses are examined at many restaurants.

And in at least one Christian-run university near the targeted church, the army set up a post, checking cars for possible bombs. Another Christian university has hired private security guards, who make sure students' backpacks and purses do not carry explosives.

Security at the American University of Beirut, already tight since a 1991 bombing that killed one person and wounded eight, was beefed up, too. Police at gates frisked students entering the 132-acre campus in Beirut's western sector.

Unprecedented security checks also were introduced at the mid-city horse race track, which attracts an average audience of 7,000 fans every Sunday.

Cars and attendants are thoroughly searched at the gates and security plainclothesmen with walkie-talkies patrol the stands through the six-hour weekly meet.

In many neighbourhoods of Beirut and outlying areas, people have been asked to be vigilant and report to police any suspicious-looking object. They were also told to watch for any unknown cars parked on the streets.

Despite the criticism, the government says it is making headway in fighting crime.

But critics point out that the culprits in the Dec. 20 car bombing of the headquarters of the Falange party, the largest rightist political group, are still unknown. That explosion killed three people and wounded 130.

And police investigation into the Jan. 29 killing of Jordanian diplomat Nayeb Imran Maytah suffered a setback when the defence lawyer for three Palestinian suspects demanded reinterrogation of his clients, saying confessions were extracted after police beatings.

Christian leaders urge Pope to defer visit, page 2.



LANDMARK VISIT: Israeli Arab parliamentarian Abdul Wahab Darawshah (right) and an unidentified official on Monday lay a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Damascus. Mr. Darawshah is leading an Israeli-Arab delegation on the first visit by Israeli citizens to Syria. He will convey condolences to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on the death in January of his son Basil (see story on page 1) (AFP photo)

PLO staffers urge Arafat to quit talks

TUNIS (AP) — More than 100 Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials and staffers have sent Yasser Arafat a memo urging him to pull out of negotiations with Israel and retract agreements he made with the Jewish state in protest over the Hebron mosque massacre.

The minimum that we should do vis-a-vis this horrible crime is to stop the negotiations at all levels and to suspend all accords and promises," said the letter, a copy of which was faxed to the Associated Press.

The appeal is the latest in a series of statements and letters from staffers to Mr. Arafat urging his withdrawal from the stalled negotiations.

The PLO, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan withdrew from the 28-month-old talks after a Jewish settler killed 60 Palestinians as they prayed in a mosque in the Israeli-occupied West Bank town of Hebron Feb. 25.

The PLO has said it will not resume talks unless Israel removes radical Israeli settlers from Arab towns and permits an international peacekeeping force in the occupied territories.

In Jordan, three Arafat confidants met with Palestinian hardliners and discussed PLO strategy following the Hebron massacre.

The discussion grouped PLO Executive Committee members and Arafat loyalists Yasser Arafat, Suleiman Nabjaj and Mohammad Zuhdi Nashashibi with former members Abdul Rahim Mallouh and Tayseer Khalid.

Mr. Mallouh, whose group is the second largest faction within the PLO after Mr. Arafat's mainstream Fatah, said the Amman meeting focused on "reorganising the Palestinian position... following the Hebron massacre."

He told the Associated Press that the talks could not narrow the differences between Arafat loyalists and the hardliners, who call for the PLO's withdrawal from the peace talks and resumption of armed struggle against Israel.

"But we will continue contacts with them," Mr. Mallouh added.

The signatories to Monday's memo included Arafat adviser Zuhdi Tarazi, a former PLO observer at the United Nations, and Abdul Latif Abu Hileh, director-general of the PLO's Political Department.

The letter urged Mr. Arafat not to accept President Bill Clinton's invitation to move the negotiations to Washington and denounced the United States as "the leader of world imperialism."

But an Arafat aide dismissed the letter as an exercise in "self-reproach," predicting it would have no effect on the PLO leader, and advised disgruntled members to turn their energies elsewhere.

Mr. Mallouh and Mr. Khalid, who belong to the hardline Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, resigned from the committee in September in protest against the Israel-PLO autonomy agreement.

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Greece mourns Mercouri

ATHENS (R) — Greece mourned actress and Culture Minister Melina Mercouri on Monday. Newspapers dedicated front pages to her, radio stations played her songs and television channels screened the films that made her a star.

People left flowers and personal notes at her Athens home and her office at the culture ministry, theatres closed and flags flew at half-mast.

Mercouri died on Sunday at the age of 68 in a New York hospital from complications after an operation for lung cancer.

"All Greek people mourn," said Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu, a long-time friend of the actress-politician.

"They worshipped her and formed a personal relation with her that will endure beyond this tragic moment."

Mercouri's body will arrive on Tuesday and will be on view at Athens cathedral, where thousands are expected to pay their last respects. The funeral, with state honours, will be held on Thursday.

"No Greek woman has ever been loved so much by everyone," said the newspaper Eleftherotypia which carried a 1960s picture of Mercouri dancing passionately, arms outstretched above her head.

The daily Ta Nea said: "In an age of lies, she was real."

Mercouri was renowned for straightforward replies to reporters' questions and non-sensical rejoinders during exchanges in Greece's notoriously hard political debates.

But her tough answers were often followed by a radiant smile and her green eyes sparkled with humour.

Her 1960 film "Never on Sunday" made her an international star and helped launch Greece's post-war tourist boom with its images of a sunny, carefree country.

Mercouri used her fame to defend the nation's ancient heritage and modern democracy.

The star's fiery denunciations of the military junta which seized power and ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974 cost Mercouri her citizenship. It was restored only after the fall of the dictators who banned her films and songs and issued a warrant for her arrest.

Composer Mikis Theodorakis, many of whose songs of resistance against the junta she made famous, said: "The most charming face of Greece is gone with Melina."

Mr. Mubarak said the plumber had been arrested.

"Instead of distributing the sum to members of his team, he bought himself a car for 26,000 pounds and made a 10,000 pound down payment for an apartment... and he was going to spend 5,000 on getting married," Mr. Mubarak said.

He gave no other details, such as when the plot was uncovered, and whether the man intended to use the vehicle to plant a car-bomb.

A car-bomb exploded outside a Cairo school Nov. 25 as Dr. Sedki's motorcade was passing, killing one schoolgirl and injuring 21 others.

Mr. Mubarak said: "I was extending my hand to it (Iran), and was ready for cooperation on the condition that none of us interferes in the affairs of the other. But they are trying to interfere."

The money does not come (to Egypt) directly, it comes through Afghanistan," Mr. Mubarak said in the interview. He said: "Most probably... the Iranians are the ones that pay 44,000 (pounds)."

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Afghans mob Kabul U.N. food warehouse

KABUL (AP) — Hundreds of hungry Afghans scaled a wall and mobbed a mosque Monday that was holding United Nations food stocks, delaying distribution by yet another day.

Also, warring factions exchanged rocket fire in the hard-hit southern and eastern parts of the city. Hospitals reported 60 wounded and one dead, but the actual toll was believed much higher.

U.N. trucks with wheat flour arrived in Kabul late Sunday, the first U.N. food supplies to reach the besieged capital since a major battle erupted Jan. 1.

Aid groups planned to hand out the food Monday, but when word spread that the supplies were at the Parwan mosque compound, the place was immediately mobbed.

Hundreds of people climbed over a one-and-a-half metre wall and tried to get to the bags of wheat.

"It's chaos. There's nothing we can do in a situation like this," said Mohammad Ayub, who works for Care International, a U.S. aid group.

Guards with automatic rifles dispersed the crowd, though many were furious at being turned back.

"I haven't eaten for two days," said a woman who gave her name only as Sanya.

Mr. Ayub said the food would be moved to a more secure site and distributed Tuesday.

He said some food already at other locations around the city might be handed out Monday.

The fighting between President Burhanuddin Rabbani's forces and Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's faction has left much of the city in ruins and created a worsening food crisis.

There have been no reports of starvation, but Monday's incident illustrated how desperate conditions have become. Tens of thousands of people are reliant on food handouts which are almost exhausted, aid groups say.

However, Mr. Hekmatyar, who controls the outskirts of the capital, says he will not permit any more supplies to enter Kabul.

His forces stopped the U.N. trucks for several days before they were allowed to pass Sunday. The renegade prime minister said he relented this time only because U.S. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali made a personal plea in a letter.

Mr. Hekmatyar and his ally, warlord Rashid Dostum, have been unable to gain any ground despite their ferocious assault on Kabul, which has left about 1,000 dead and some 12,000 wounded.

But they remain dug in on the southern and eastern fringes of the city, controlling the main roads into Kabul.

Egypt accuses Iran of plot to kill Sedki

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak said in an interview published Monday that Iran had tried to kill Egypt's prime minister, but that the plot had been foiled.

In an interview with Kuwait's independent Al Qabas daily, Mr. Mubarak said Iran had paid 44,000 Egyptian pounds (\$13,100) to an Egyptian plumber to finance an attack on Prime Minister Atef Sedki, but that the unidentified middleman had spent the money on himself.

Mr. Mubarak did not say whether this effort was in any way connected to a failed assassination attempt on Dr. Sedki in November.

Mr. Mubarak, who has blamed Iran for financing extremist fundamentalists seeking to overthrow his government, said the money for the plot had come through Afghanistan.

"The money does not come (to Egypt) directly, it comes through Afghanistan," Mr. Mubarak said in the interview. He said: "Most probably... the Iranians are the ones that pay 44,000 (pounds)."

Mr. Mubarak said the plumber had been arrested.

"Instead of distributing the sum to members of his team, he bought himself a car for 26,000 pounds and made a 10,000 pound down payment for an apartment... and he was going to spend 5,000 on getting married," Mr. Mubarak said.

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